SCOTTISH SCENE

or

THE INTELLIGENT MAN'S GUIDE TO ALBYN

LEWIS GRASSIC GIBBON

&

HUGH MacDIARMID

A24

SCOTTISH SCENE

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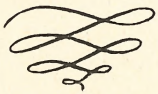

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To an Englishman something is what it is called : to a Scotsman something is what it is.

Compton Mackenzie

We were always in the habit of conversing with the Highlanders—with whom one comes so much in contact in the Highlands.

Queen Victoria

From what I have seen of the Scotch, they hate the English, but they hate everyone else worse.

Kenneth Roberts

FOR

HELEN B. CRUICKSHANK

WITH OUR AFFECTION AND ADMIRATION

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CURTAIN RAISER

Mr. Lewis Grassic Gibbon proposed the scheme of this book to Mr. Hugh MacDiarmid. Then they drew up a synopsis and went their separate ways, each to write his separate sections—one wrote the most of his in a pleasant village near London, the other in the sound of the running seas by the Shetlands. They believed that distance from the Scottish Scene would lend them some clarity in viewing it.

But—though they agree in many matters—their views of that scene are conditioned by many other factors than those of separate geographical focus. The standpoint of the one in controversial matters—and what matters in modern Scotland are not controversial?—is not necessarily that of the other. The one (as these pages will make plain) is seldom a convert to the other's entire beliefs. Yet perhaps this is rather advantage than disadvantage. Viewing the Scottish Scene from such different angles, cultural and geographical, may give the better composite picture.

L. G. G.

1934 H. MacD.

SCOTLAND

I

Just think how terrible it would be
If the people who name
The Housing Scheme streets and bungalows
Could play the same game
With the things in Scotland that really matter
—Its peerless glories of land and water!

We would waken up some morning to find
That by way of a change
The Grampians had been re-christened
The Amy Mollison Range;
And of course, Killiecrankie by then
Would be Princess Margaret Rose Glen.

With Barriesque whimsicality
Ben Nevis, one fears
Might become Sky-View Summit,
And the Tay Churchill's Tears,
And Glasgow be modernized still
As Maxtontown or Horneville.

Arthur's *Seat* on account
Of the vulgar dubiety
Would be better transformed
To King's *Head* most folks would agree,
And instead of the Forth that marine gorge
Should be dubbed the Fifth in honour of George.

Enough? thank God our place-names
Antedated our Anglicization,

But in other and far more vital
Respects, alas, our nation
Is ruined by equivalents of calling
Briareach the Pines, or Bellevue for Schiehallion.

II

Canty, Ethie, Usan, Catterline,
Pennan, Crovie, Embo, Forse,
Clyth, Sarclet, Staxigoe, Keiss
—We know our Scotland well, of course.

The names of all the Shetland Isles
We rattle off like lightning thus,
The Orkneys then, the Hebrides,
Like coloured balls in an abacus.

And Cunningham and Lennox
And all our ancient provinces
—No fool among us but in his mind
Better than an ordnance survey sees!

And *Scotia Irredenta*
That down into England goes
As far as the Humber-Mersey Line
—O every true Scotsman knows!

For our educational system
Is so good that instantly
If Scotland's mentioned every place
Within its bounds at once we see,

See, and know all about it,
Past, present, future—all
Its history and its interests
Our synoptic wits recall.

And all our nation's matchless types,
Haaf-fishers, Berwickshire bondagers,
And scores of others fill our thoughts,
And the *minutiæ* of their affairs.

Local speech variants—every true Scot
Has all these cunning shibboleths pat;
Intranational differences of every kind
Are a hobby he's an expert at.

Nor is the whole lost in the parts,
All Scotland seen save Scotland yet;
He sees his land as a unity too,
And Creation in terms of it.

The future concerns him even more
Than the past or the present do;
He boasts of his proleptic power
—And is entitled to!

O every Scot knows the Loch of the Lowes,
Coppercleuch, Langhaugh, and Eddleston,
And Capplegill and Shortwoodend,
Like the knobs on his own backbone.

Invergarry, Tomdown, and Claunie Inn,
Dornie, Strome Ferry, and Ashnasheen,
And Kinlochawe and Loch Maree
Like the lines on his hands are seen.

"Suilven, Canisp, Ben More, Assynt"
Our infants chant on their mothers' knees;
And often even—the little rogues—
A long while before they first reach these!

And sometimes a Scot on entering Heaven
Has to cry: " It's queer—but I quite forget
This clachan's name—unless it's a new scheme
Of the Scottish Board of Health's—Aye, that'll be it! "

. . . .

What? You claim you're a Scotsman too?
Come, let us test you then, my friend.
Where is Quothquhan Law? And where
Does the Molendinar begin and end?

Where are Fladda Chuain and the Ascrib Isles?
Where's Handa Island? And how can you tell
A Hawick man from a Langholm man?
And where's Padanaram? You're doing well.

Now for your futurist faculty then!
When will Scots people begin to know
As much about Scotland as ghosts in a fog
And not care far less?—I thought so!

SECTION THE FIRST

§ 1. Essay — Lewis Grassic Gibbon

THE ANTIQUE SCENE

The history of Scotland may be divided into the three phases of Colonization, Civilization, and Barbarization. That the last word is a synonym for Anglicization is no adverse reflection upon the quality of the great English culture. Again and again, in the play of the historic forces, a great civilization imposed on an alien and lesser has compassed that alien's downfall.

Few things cry so urgently for rewriting as does Scots history, in few aspects of her bastardized culture has Scotland been so ill-served as by her historians. The chatter and gossip of half the salons and drawing-rooms of European intellectualism hang over the antique Scottish scene like a malarial fog through which peer the fictitious faces of heroic Highlanders, hardy Norsemen, lovely Stewart queens, and dashing Jacobite rebels. Those stage-ghosts shamble amid the dimness, and mope and mow in their ancient parts with an idiotic vacuity but a maddening persistence. Modern research along orthodox lines balks from the players, or re-names them shyly and retires into footnotes on Kaltwasser.

Yet behind those grimaces of the romanticized or alien imagination a real people once lived and had its being, and hoped and feared and hated, and was greatly uplifted, and loved its children, and knew agony of the patriotic spirit, and was mean and bestial, and generous, and sardonically merciful. Behind the posturings of those poltergeists are the lives of millions of the lowly who wiped the sweats of toil from browned faces and smelt the pour of waters by the Mull of Kintyre and the winds of autumn in the Grampian haughs and the sour, sweet odours of the upland

tarns; who tramped in their varying costumes and speeches to the colour and play of the old guild-towns; who made great poetry and sang it; who begat their kind in shame or delight in the begetting; who were much as you or I, human animals bedevilled or uplifted by the play of the forces of civilization in that remote corner of the Western world which we call Scotland.

All human civilizations originated in Ancient Egypt. Through the accident of time and chance and the cultivation of wild barley in the Valley of the Nile, there arose in a single spot on the earth's surface the urge in men to upbuild for their economic salvation the great fabric of civilization. Before the planning of that architecture enslaved the minds of men, man was a free and happy and undiseased animal wandering the world in the Golden Age of the poets (and reality) from the Shetlands to Tierra del Fuego. And from that central focal point in Ancient Egypt the first civilizers spread abroad the globe the beliefs and practices, the diggings and plantings and indignations and shadowy revilements of the Archaic Civilization.

They reached Scotland in some age that we do not know, coming to the Islands of Mist in search of copper and gold and pearls, Givers of Life in the fantastic theology that followed the practice of agriculture. They found the Scots lowlands and highlands waving green into morning and night tremendous forests where the red deer belled, where the great bear, perhaps, had still his tracks and his caverns, where wolves howled the hills in great scattering packs, where, in that forested land, a danker climate than to-day prevailed. And amid those forests and mountain slopes lived the Golden Age hunters—men perhaps mainly of Maglemosian stock, dark and sinewy and agile, intermixed long ages before with other racial stocks, the stock of Cro-Magnard and Magdalenian who had followed the ice-caps north when the reindeer vanished from the French valleys. They were men naked, cultureless, without religion or social organization, shy hunters, courageous, happy, kindly, who stared at the advent of the first great boats that brought the miners and explorers of the Archaic Civilization from Crete or Southern Spain. They flocked down to stare at the new-comers, to offer tentative gifts of food and the like; and to set on their necks the yoke under which all mankind has since passed.

For the Archaic civilization rooted in Scotland. Agriculture was learned from the Ancient Mariners and with it the host of rites deemed necessary to propitiate the gods of the earth and the sky. Village communities came into being, the first peasants with the first overlords, those priestly overlords who built the rings of the Devil Stones on the high places from Lewis to Aberdeenshire. And the ages came and passed and the agricultural belts grew and spread, and the smoke of sacrifice rose from a thousand altars through the length and breadth of the land at the times of seedtime and harvest, feast and supplication. They buried their dead in modifications of the Egyptian fashion, in Egyptian graves. There came to them, in the slow ebb of the centuries, a driftage of other cultural elements from that ferment of civilization in the basin of the Mediterranean. They learned their own skill with stick and stone, presently with copper, and at last with bronze. But, until the coming of the makers of bronze that Archaic civilization in Scotland, as elsewhere, was one singularly peaceful and undisturbed. Organized warfare had yet to dawn on the Western World.

How it dawned is too lengthy a tale to tell here in any detail: how bands of forest-dwellers in the Central European areas, uncivilized, living on the verge of the great settlements of the Archaic communities and absorbing little but the worst of their practices, fell on those communities and murdered them was the first great tragedy of pre-Christian Europe. The ancient matriarchies of the Seine were wiped from existence and in their place, (and presently across the Channel) came swarming the dagger-armed hosts of a primitive who, never civilized, had become a savage. This was the Kelt.

We see his advent in the fragments of sword and buckler that lie ticketed in our museums; but all the tale of that rape of a civilization by the savage, far greater and infinitely more tragic than the rape of the Roman Empire by the Goth, is little more than a faint moan and murmur in the immense cañons of near-history. In Scotland, no doubt, he played his characteristic part, the Kelt, coming armed on a peaceful population, slaying and robbing and finally enslaving, establishing himself as king and overlord, routing the ancient sun-priests from the holy places and establishing his own devil-haunted, uneasy myths and gods

through the efforts of the younger sons. From Berwick to Cape Wrath the scene for two hundred years must have been a weary repetition, year upon year, of invasion and murder, inversion and triumph. When Pytheas sailed the Scottish coasts it is likely that the Kelt had triumphed almost everywhere. By the time the Romans came raiding across the English Neck Scotland was a land of great barbaric Kelt tribes, armed and armoured, with a degenerate, bastardized culture and some skill in war and weapon-making. It was as capable of producing a ferocious soldiery and a great military leader like Calgacus as it was incapable of a single motif in art or song to influence the New Civilization of the European World.

Yet of that culture of those Picts or Painted Men, those Caledonians whom the Romans encountered and fought and marvelled upon, it is doubtful if a single element of any value had been contributed by the Kelt. It is doubtful if the Kelts ever contributed a single item to the national cultures of the countries miscalled Keltic. It is doubtful for the best of reasons: There is no proof that the Kelts, invading Britain, came in any great numbers. They were a conquering military caste, not a people in migration: they imposed their language and their social organization upon the basic Maglemosian-Mediterranean stock; they survived into remoter times, the times of Calgacus, the times of Kenneth MacAlpin, as nobles, an aristocracy on horseback. They survive to the present day as a thin strand in the Scottish population: half Scotland's landed gentry is by descent Normanized Kelt. But the Kelts are a strain quite alien to the indubitable and original Scot. They were, and remain, one of the greatest curses of the Scottish scene, quick, avaricious, unintelligent, quarrelsome, cultureless, and uncivilizable. It is one of the strangest jests of history that they should have given their name to so much that is fine and noble, the singing of poets and the fighting of great fights, in which their own actual part has been that of gaping, unintelligent audition or mere carrion-bird raiding.

The first serious modification of the basic Pictish stock did not occur until towards the end of the sixth Christian century, when the Northumbrian Angles flowed upwards, kingdom-building, as far as the shores of the Firth of Forth. They were a people and nation in transit; they extermi-

nated or reduced to villeinage the Kelt-led Picts of those lands: they succeeded in doing those things not because they were braver or more generous or God-inspired than the Pictish tribes, but because of the fact that they were backed by the Saxon military organization, their weapons were better, and apparently they fronted a congeries of warring tribes inanely led in the usual Keltic fashion—tribes which had interwarred and raided and murdered and grown their crops and drunk their ale unstirred by alien adventures since the passing of the Romans. The Angle pressed north, something new to the scene, bringing his own distinctive culture and language, his own gods and heroes and hero-myths. About the same time a tribe of Kelt-led Irish Mediterraneans crossed in some numbers into Argyllshire and allied themselves with, or subdued the ancient inhabitants. From that alliance or conquest arose the kingdom of Dalriada—the Kingdom of the Scots. Yet this Irish invasion had no such profound effect on the national culture as the coming of the Angles in the South: the Irish Scots were of much the same speech and origin as the Argyllshire natives among whom they settled.

With the coming of the Angles, indeed, the period of Colonization comes to a close. It is amusing to note how modern research disposes of the ancient fallacies which saw Scotland overrun by wave after wave of conquering, colonizing peoples. Scotland was colonized only twice—once fairly completely, once partially, the first time when the Maglemosian hunters drifted north, in hunting, happy-go-lucky migration; the second time, when the Angles lumbered up into Lothian. The Kelt, the Scot, the Norseman, the Norman were no more than small bands of raiders and robbers. The peasant at his immemorial toil would lift his eyes to see a new master installed at the broch, at the keep, at, later, the castle: and would shrug the matter aside as one of indifference, turning, with the rain in his face, to the essentials of existence, his fields, his cattle, his woman in the dark little eirde, earth-house.

The three hundred years after that almost simultaneous descent of Scot and Angle on different sectors of the Scottish scene is a tangle of clumsy names and loutish wars. Kings bickered and bred and murdered and intrigued, armies marched and counter-marched and perpetrated heroisms now dust and nonsense, atrocities the dried blood of which

are now not even dust. Christianity came in a number of guises, the Irish heresy a chill blink of light in its coming. It did little or nothing to alter the temper of the times, it was largely a matter of politics and place-seeking, Columba and John Knox apart there is no ecclesiastic in Scots history who does not but show up in the light of impartial research as either a posturing ape, rump scratching in search of soft living, or as a moronic dullard, hag-ridden by the grisly transplanted fears of the Levant. The peasant merely exchanged the bass chanting of the Druid in the pre-Druid circles for the whining hymnings of priests in wood-built churches; and turned to his land again.

But presently, coastwise, north, west, and east, a new danger was dragging him in reluctant levies from his ancient pursuits. This was the coming of the Norsemen.

If the Kelts were the first great curse of Scotland, the Norse were assuredly the second. Both have gathered to themselves in the eyes of later times qualities and achievements to which the originals possessed no fragment of a claim. The dreamy, poetic, God-moved Kelt we have seen as a mere Chicagoan gangster, murderous, avaricious, culturally sterile, a typical aristocrat, typically base. The hardy, heroic Norseman uncovers into even sorrier reality. He was a farmer or fisherman, raiding in order to supplement the mean livelihood he could draw from more praiseworthy pursuits in the Norwegian fjords. The accident of his country lying at the trans-Baltic end of the great trans-Continental trade-route had provided him with the knowledge of making steel weapons in great number and abundance. Raiding Scotland, he was in no sense a superior or heroic type subduing a lowly or inferior; he was merely a pirate with a good cutlass, a thug with a sudden and efficient strangling-rope. Yet those dull, dyspeptic whey-faced clowns have figured in all orthodox histories as the bringers of something new and vital to Scottish culture, as an invigorating strain, a hard and splendid ingredient. It is farcical that it should be necessary to affirm at this late day that the Norseman brought nothing of any permanence to Scotland other than his characteristic gastritis.

Yet that cutlass carved great sections from the Scottish coasts: presently all the Western Isles had suffered a profound infiltration of the thin, mean blood of the northern sea-raiders. In the east, the attacks were almost purely

burglarious. The hardy Norseman, with his long grey face so unfortunately reminiscent of a horse's, would descend on that and this village or township, steal and rape and fire, and then race for his ships to escape encounter with the local levies. On such occasions as he landed in any force, and met the Picts (even the idiotically badly-led, Kelt-led Picts) in any force, he would, as at the Battle of Aberlemno, be routed with decision and vigour. Yet those constant raidings weakened the Eastern kingdom of the Picts: in A.D. 844 the Scot king, Kenneth MacAlpin, succeeded to the Pictish throne—it was evidently regarded as the succession of a superior to the estates of an inferior. Thereafter the name Pict disappears from Scottish history, though, paradoxically immortal, the Pict remained.

From 1034, when Duncan ascended the Scottish throne, until 1603, when James VI ascended the English throne, Scotland occupied herself, willy-nilly, in upbuilding her second (and last) characteristic civilization. Her first, as we have seen, was that modification of the Archaic Civilization which the Kelts overthrew; this second which slowly struggled into being under the arrow-hails, the ridings and rapings and throat-cuttings of official policy, the jealous restraints of clerical officialdom, was compounded of many cultural strands. It was in essentials a Pictish civilization, as the vast majority of the inhabitants remained Picts. But, in the Lowlands, it had changed once again its speech, relinquishing the alien Keltic in favour of the equally alien Anglo-Saxon. The exchange was a matter of domestic policy, a febrific historical accident hinged on the bed-favours wrung from his consort by the henpecked Malcolm Canmore.

The third of the name of Malcolm to rule in Scotland, his speech, his court, and his official pronunciamentos were all Keltic until he wedded the Princess Margaret, who had fled from the Norman invasion of England. A great-niece of Edward the Confessor, Margaret was a pious daughter of the Church and greatly shocked at the Keltic deviations from Roman dates and ceremonial incantations. She devoted her life to bringing the usages of the Scottish Church into harmony with orthodox Catholicism. She bred assiduously: she bred six sons and two daughters, and in return for the delights of the shameful intimacies which begat this offspring, the abashed Malcolm refrained from

any hand in their christening. They were all christened with good English names, they were taught English as their native speech, they lived to grow up and Anglicize court and church and town. Of the two great women in Scots history it is doubtful if the most calamitously pathological influence should be ascribed to Margaret the Good or to Mary the Unchaste.

Yet this Anglicization was a surface Anglicization. English speech and English culture alike were as yet fluid things: it meant no cultural subjection to the southern half of the island. It begat a tradition, a speech, an art and a literature in the southern half of Scotland which were set in an Anglo-Saxon, not an English, mould, but filled with the deep spiritual awarenesses of the great basic race which wielded this new cultural weapon as once it had wielded the Keltic. It was a thing national and with a homely and accustomed feel, this language in which Wyntoun and Barbour and Blind Harry were presently telling the epic stories of the great War of Independence.

The effect of that war, the unceasing war of several centuries, was calamitous to the Scots civilization in the sense that it permanently impoverished it, leaving Scotland, but for a brief blink, always a poor country economically, and a blessing in that it set firmly in the Scots mind the knowledge of national homogeneity: Scotland was the home of true political nationalism (once a liberating influence, not as now an inhibiting one)—not the nationalism forced upon an unwilling or indifferent people by the intrigues of kings and courtesans, but the spontaneous uprising of an awareness of blood-brotherhood and freedom-right. In the midst of the many dreary and shameful pages of the book of Scottish history the story of the rising of the Scots under the leadership of William Wallace still rings splendid and amazing. Wallace was one of the few authetic national heroes: authentic in the sense that he apprehended and moulded the historic forces of his time in a fashion denied to all but a few of the world's great political leaders. Cromwell, Lincoln, Lenin.

It was 1296. Scotland, after a dynastic squabble on the rights of this and that boorish noble to ascend the Scottish throne and there cheat and fornicate after the divine rights of kings, had been conquered, dismembered and ground in the mud by Edward the First of England. He did it with

a cold and bored efficiency, as a man chastising and chaining a slobbering, yelping cur. Then he returned to England; and the chained cur suddenly awoke in the likeness of a lion.

"The instinct of the Scottish people," wrote John Richard Green, "has guided it right in choosing Wallace for its national hero. He was the first to assert freedom as a national birthright." His assertion roused Scotland. The peasants flocked to his standard—suddenly, and for perhaps the first time in Scots history, stirred beyond their customary indifference over the quarrels of their rulers. Here was something new, a leader who promised something new. Nor did he only promise: presently he was accomplishing. At the head of a force that bore the significant title of the "Army of the Commons of Scotland" Wallace met and routed the English in pitched battle at Cambuskenneth Bridge in 1297, was offered the crown of Scotland, refused it, and instead was nominated Guardian of Scotland, a great republican with the first of the great republican titles, albeit he called himself a royalist.

For a year it seemed his cause would sweep everything before it. The laggard nobles came to join him. Presently the Army of the Commons of Scotland was being poisoned by the usual aristocratic intrigues, though still the troubled peasants and townsmen clung to their faith in the Guardian. Then news came that Edward in person was on the march against Scotland. Wallace assembled all his forces and met the invader at Falkirk. The Scots cavalry, noble-recruited, noble-led, strategically placed to fall on the ranks of the English archers and rout them at the crucial moment, fled without striking a blow. Wallace's great schiltrouns of heroic peasant spearmen were broken and dispersed.

Wallace himself sailed for France, seeking aid there for his distracted country. In 1304 he returned, was captured by the English, tried and condemned as a traitor, and hanged, castrated, and disembowelled on Tower Hill. This judicial murder is one of the first and most dreadful examples of that characteristic English frightfulness wielded throughout history against the defenders of alien and weaker peoples. More serious than Wallace's personal fate, it murdered that fine hope and enthusiasm that had stirred the Army of the Scots Commons on the morning of

Falkirk. In a kind of despairing hatred, not hope, the Scots people turned to support the rebellions of the various shoddy noble adventurers who now raised the standard against the English. By intrigue, assassination, and some strategical skill one of those nobles, Robert the Brus, had presently disposed of all his rivals, had himself crowned king, and, after various reverses and flights and hidings and romantic escapades in company with spiders and Lorne loons, succeeded in routing the English at the Battle of Bannockburn. With that victory the Scots royalties came to their own again, however little the Scots commons.

Yet, in the succeeding centuries of wars and raids, dynastic begettings and dynastic blood-lettings, the commons of Scotland showed a vigour both un-English and un-French in defence of the rights of the individual. Villeinage died early in Scotland: the independent tenant-retainer came early on the scene in the Lowlands. In the Highlands the clan system, ostensibly aristocratic, was never so in actuality. It was a communistic patriarchy, the relation of the chief to his meanest clansman the relation of an elder blood brother, seldom of a noble to a serf. The guildsmen of the towns modelled their policies on those of the Hansa cities and Augsburg, rather than on the slavish subservience of their contemporaries in England. Presently the French alliance, disastrous from a military point of view, was profoundly leavening the character of Scots culture, leavening, not obliterating it. Scots built and carved and sang and wrote with new tools of technique and vocabulary to hand. The Scots civilization of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries absorbed its great cultural impulses from the Continent; as a consequence, Scots literature in the fifteenth century is already a great literature while in contemporary England there is little more than the maundering of a poetasting host of semi-illiterates. Despite the feuds and squabbles of noble and king, there came into being a rude plenty in Scotland of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The reign of James the Fourth was, economically and culturally, the Golden Age of the great Scots civilization. Its duration was brief and its fate soon that which had overtaken the Golden Age of the happy Pict hunters three thousand years before.

The end of James the Fourth at Flodden in 1513, the dark end to the greatest raid of the Scots into England,

plunged the country into fifteen years of mis-government, when this and that clownish noble attempted to seize the power through this and that intrigue of palace and bed-chamber. The Golden Age faded rapidly as marauding bands of horse clattered up the cobbled streets of the towns and across the fertile Lowland crop-lands. By the time the Fifth James assumed the power Scotland was a distracted country, the commons bitterly taxed and raided and oppressed, the ruler in castle and keep a gorged and stinking carrion-crow. James, the Commons' King, the one heroic royalty in Scots history, faced a hopeless task with the broken and impoverished commons but half aware of his championship. He put down the nobles with a ruthless hand, defied the monk-murdering Henry VIII of England, established the Court of Session and the Supreme Court of Justice; he might well have re-established the economic prosperity of his father's reign but for the English invasion of the country in 1542. The nobles refused to join the army he raised—the pitiful Church army routed at Solway Moss. Dying at Falkland Palace a few days later James, God's Scotsman as he has been well called, heard of the birth of a daughter. "It cam wi' a lass and 'twill gang wi' a lass," he said, speaking perhaps of his own dynasty; unforeseeing the fact that it was the Scots civilization itself that that daughter was to see in early eclipse.

That eclipse was inaugurated by the coming of the tumultuous change in Christian ritualism and superstitious practice dignified by the name of Reformation. Into its many causes in Western Europe there is no need to enter here. Nobles hungered to devour Church lands; churchmen were often then, as later, cowardly and avaricious souls; the Church, then as often, seemed intellectually moribund, a dead weight lying athwart the minds of men. So, in apparent dispute as to the correct method of devouring the symbolic body of the dead god, symbolically slain, hell was let loose on the European scene for a long two hundred years. Men fought and died with enthusiasm in the cause of ceremonial cannibalism. In Scotland the Reforming party had been growing to power even in the age of the Fifth James. During the long minority of his daughter, Mary Queen of Scots, it was frequently in possession of the reins of power: in 1557 it gathered together

its forces and signed a National Convention for the establishment of the Reformed Faith.

Two years afterwards the ecclesiastic, John Knox, returned from a long exile in England and on the Continent. Knox had served as a slave on the French galleys for eighteen months after the assassination of Cardinal Beaton in 1546, he had definite and clear beliefs on the part the Reformation must play in Scotland, and in the years of his exile he had wandered from haunt to haunt of the European revolutionaries (much as Lenin did in the first decade of the twentieth century) testing out his own creed in converse and debate with Calvin and the like innovators. Once again a Scotsman had arisen capable of apprehending the direction of the historic forces, and determined to enchannel those for the benefit of a Commons' Scotland. The nauseous character of his political allies in Scotland did not deter him from the conflict. In the triumphant Parliament summoned in 1560 the Protestants under his direction established the Reformed Church, forbade the mass, and practically legalized the wholesale seizure of Church property. Knox's intentions with regard to the disposal of that property were definite and unshakable: it would be used for the relief of the poor, for the establishment of free schools, for the sustentation of a free people's priesthood. But, though he had foreseen the direction of the historic forces thus far, history proved on the side of his robbing allies, not on his. The Covenant left the Commons poorer than ever and Knox an embittered and sterile leader, turning from his battle in the cause of the people to sardonic denunciations of the minor moral lapses of the young Queen.

He was a leader defeated: and history was to ascribe to him and his immediate followers, and with justice, blame for some of the most terrible aberrations of the Scots spirit in succeeding centuries. Yet Knox himself was of truly heroic mould; had his followers, far less his allies, been of like mettle, the history of Scotland might have been strangely and splendidly different. To pose him against the screen of antique time as an inhibition-ridden neurotic (as is the modern fashion) who murdered the spirit and hope of an heroic young queen, is malicious distortion of the true picture. The 'heroic young queen' in question

had the face, mind, manners and morals of a well-intentioned but hysterical poodle.

Her succession by the calamitous Sixth James, who was summoned to the English throne in 1603, was the beginning of the end of the Scots civilization. That end came quickly. Not only had temporal power moved from Edinburgh to London (for at least a while), but the cultural focus had shifted as well. There began that long process of barbarization of the Scots mind and culture which is still in progress. Presently it was understood to be rather a shameful thing to be a Scotsman, to make Scots poetry, to be subject to Scots law, to be an inhabitant of the northern half of the island. The Diffusionist school of historians holds that the state of Barbarism is no half-way house of a progressive people towards full and complete civilization: on the contrary, it marks a degeneration from an older civilization, as Savagery is the state of a people absorbing only the poorer elements of an alien culture. The state of Scotland since the Union of the Crowns gives remarkable support to this view, though the savagery of large portions of the modern urbanized population had a fresh calamity —the Industrial Revolution—to father it.

Yet, though all art is no more than the fine savour and essence of the free life, its decay and death in Scotland was no real mark of the subjection and decay of the free Scottish spirit: it was merely a mark of that spirit in an anguished travail that has not yet ceased. Presently, gathering that unquenchable force into new focus, came the Covenanting Times, the call of the Church of Knox to be defended as the Church of the Commons, of the People, bitterly assailed by noble and King. That the call was justified we may doubt, that the higher councils of the Church government themselves were other than sedulously manipulated tyrannies in the hands of the old landed Keltic gentry may also be doubted. But to large sections of the Lowland Scots the Covenant was not so much a sworn bond between themselves and God as between their own souls and freedom. They flocked to its standards in the second Bishops' War, they invaded England. For a time the Covenanting Scots Army at Newcastle dictated English policy, ruled England, and almost imposed on it the Presbytery. Thereafter, in the sway and clash of the Parliamentarian wars, it suffered collapse under the weight of its own prosperity

and rottenness. Cromwell forcibly dissolved the General Assembly of the Scots Church in 1653, incorporated Scotland in the Commonwealth, and marched home leaving a country under English military governance—a country chastised and corrected, but strangely unbroken in spirit. Scotland and the Scots, after a gasp of surprise, accepted Cromwell with a wary trust. Here, and again, as once in those brief days when the standards of the Guardian of Scotland unfurled by Stirling Brig, was something new on the Scottish scene—English-inspired, but new and promising. If they laboured under dictatorship, so did the English. If their nobles were proscribed and persecuted, so were the English. If their frontier was down, trade with England and the English colonies was free. . . . It was a glimpse of the Greater Republicanism; and it faded almost before Scotland could look on it. The Second Charles returned and enforced the Episcopacy on the Scots, and from 1660 until 1690 Scotland travailed in such political Terror as has few parallels in history.

The People's Church gathered around it the peasants—especially the western peasants—in its defence. At Rullion Green the Covenanting Army was defeated, and an orgy of suppression followed. Covenanters were tortured with rigour and a sadistic ingenuity before being executed in front of their own houses, in sight of their own women-folk. In the forefront of this business of oppression were the Scots nobles, led by Graham of Claverhouse, "Bonny Dundee." This remarkable individual, so much biographied and romanticized by later generations, was both a sadist and a criminal degenerate. He was one in a long train of the Scots nobility. He had few qualities to recommend him, his generalship was poor and his strategy worse. Torturing unarmed peasants was the utmost reach of statesmanship ever achieved by this hero of the romantics. Where he met an army—even a badly organized army as at Drumclog—he was ignominiously defeated and fled with the speed and panic of the thin-blooded pervert that he was. His last battle, that of Killiecrankie, he won by enlisting the aid of the Highlanders against those whom they imagined to be their enemies. His portrayed face has a rat-like look in the mean, cold eyes; his name has a sour stench still in the pages of Scottish history.

That last battle of his marked almost the end of the

Church persecutions: the Kirk of Scotland emerged with the Revolution from its long night into a day of power and pomp. So doing, following an infallible law of history, it shed the enthusiasm and high loyalty of all generous souls. From 1690 onwards the history of the churches in Scotland is a history of minor and unimportant brawling on questions of state support and state denunciation, it is an oddly political history, reflecting the dreary play of politics up to and after the Union of the Parliaments, the Union which destroyed the last outward symbols of the national civilization.

Whatever the growing modern support for repudiation of that Union, it is well to realize that the first tentative moves towards it came from the side of the Scots Parliament, if not of the Scots people. As early as 1689 the Scots Parliament appointed commissioners to treat for an "incorporating union," though nothing came of it. Scottish trade and Scottish industry was very desperately hampered by the English Navigation Act, in which Scots were treated as aliens; and also by the fact that the Scots lacked any overseas dominion on which to dump their surpluses of wealth and population—though indeed, except in the farcical economics of that time (ours are no less farcical) they had surpluses of neither. The first attempts at Union came to nothing: the Scots turned their energies to founding a colony in Darien.

The attempt was disastrous: the Spaniards, already in possession, and aided and abetted by powerful English influences, beat off the settlers. News of the disaster killed among the Scots people any desire for union with the auld enemy; nor indeed did they ever again support it. The Union was brought about by as strange a series of intrigues as history is aware of: England ingeniously bribed her way to power. There was little real resistance in the Scots Parliament except by such lonely figures as Fletcher of Saltoun. On May 1st, 1707, Scotland officially ceased to be a country and became "that part of the United Kingdom, North Britain." Scotsmen officially ceased to be Scots, and became Britons—presumably North Britons. England similarly lost identity—impatiently, on a scrap of paper. But everyone knew, both at home and abroad, that what really had happened was the final subjugation of the

Scots by the English, and the absorption of the northern people into the polity and name of the southern.

There was a smouldering fire of resistance: it sprang to flame twice in the course of the first half-century. In 1715 the Earl of Mar raised the standard for the exiled Jacobite King. He received a support entirely unwarranted by either his own person or that of the puppet monarch whose cause he championed. At the strange, drawn battle of Sheriffmuir the Jacobite rebellion was not so much suppressed as suddenly bored. It was as though its supporters were overtaken by a desire to yawn at the whole affair. They melted from the field, not to assemble, they or their sons, for another thirty years.

This was with the landing of Prince Charles Edward in the Highlands in 1745. Scotland—Scotland of the Highlands, great sections of Scotland of the Lowlands—took him to her heart. The clans rose in his support, not unwillingly following the call of their chiefs. Here was relief from that crushing sense of inferiority that had pressed on the nation since the first day of the Union: here was one who promised to restore the Ancient Times—the time of meal and milk and plenty of the Fifth James; here was one who promised Scotland her nationhood again. In after years it became the fashion to pretend that the vast mass of the Scots people were indifferent to, or hostile to, this last adventure of the Stewarts. But there was no Scotsman worthy of the name who was not, at least at first, an enthusiast and a partisan.

Charles marched from victory to victory: presently he was marching across the Borders with an ill-equipped army of Highlanders and Lowland levies, seeking the support promised him by the English Jacobites. He sought it in vain. To the English Jacobite, to all the English, it was plain that here was no exiled English king come to reclaim his throne: here was something long familiar in wars with the northern enemy—a Scots army on a raid. Charles turned back at Derby, and, turning, lost the campaign, lost the last chance to restore the ancient nationhood of Scotland, lost (which was of no importance) himself.

His final defeat at Culloden inaugurated the ruthless extirpation of the clan system in the Highlands, the extirpation of almost a whole people. Sheep-farming came to the Highlands, depopulating its glens, just as the Industrial

Revolution was coming to the Lowlands, enriching the new plutocracy and brutalizing the ancient plebs. Glasgow and Greenock were coming into being as the last embers of the old Scots culture flickered and fuffed and went out.

There followed that century and a half which leads us to the present day, a century through which we hear the wail of children in unending factories and in night-time slums, the rantings of place-seeking politicians, the odd chirping and cackling of the bastardized Scots romantic schools in music and literature. It is a hundred and fifty years of unloveliness and pridelessness, of growing wealth and growing impoverishment, of Scotland sharing in the rise and final torturing maladjustments of that economic system which holds all the modern world in thrall. It was a hundred and fifty years in which the ancient Pictish spirit remembered only at dim intervals, as in a nightmare, the cry of the wind in the hair of freemen in that ancient life of the Golden Age, the play of the same wind in the banners of Wallace when he marshalled his schiltrouns at Falkirk.

§ 2. Essay — Hugh MacDiarmid

THE MODERN SCENE

I

Just as ten years ago I realized (a realization that the multiplication of little Douglas Groups and *Free Man* units all over Scotland is only tardily overtaking now) that politics were only a shadow-play, a sham fight, and that real power lay with the banks, so I find it a little difficult in Scotland to-day to agree that all the talk of national planning, trade development, rural recolonization, and the rest of it is not beside the point and that the vital considerations in relation to our national destiny have not been long determined in a very different direction altogether. Is all the babble of voices concerned with the future of Scotland to-day no more than a smoke-screen behind which over-riding factors, entirely unsuspected by the people at large, are at work on schemes for which no popular mandate would ever be forthcoming? It would be no new thing in the course of history if it were so. One thinks of "His Excellency the Spectre," Fritz von Holstein; if a Holstein

could exist unknown, before the War, and create a situation out of which the War arose, there is no guarantee that a similar obscure power is not to-day creating a situation which will result "inevitably" in another conflict. I do not suffer from a plot mania; but there are a lot of these mystery-men about—a tremendous amount of power in the hands of people of whom the general public knows nothing until it is too late. Early in 1921, when the newly elected President Harding was forming his administration, the name of a certain Andrew W. Mellon, of Pittsburgh, was suggested to him as suitable for the Secretaryship of the Treasury. "Mellon—Mellon," muttered Harding, "I don't know him." When the appointment was officially announced, the American Press had to consult the reference books in order to find out something about the new Secretary, and the results of this research were extremely scanty. For several weeks, leading New York papers were undecided about his middle initial, which was variously given as "G", "J", and "D". It was presently ascertained that he was one of the richest men in the country and a member of a family which rivalled the Rockefellers, not only in the resources they controlled but in actual wealth. "It is not the least amongst their achievements," commented a New York journal, "that they have been able to distract popular attention from this fact so long." In 1933, at the end of nearly four years of business "depression", the Mellon fortune is estimated at over $2,000,000,000, while the members of the family are associated in corporations whose assets and resources amount to nearly $10,500,000,000.

The results of Mr. Mellon's political career are aptly summarized in the following paragraph: "He left behind him at the Treasury the greatest peace-time deficit in the history of the United States, and he had not been away from Washington four months when Congress wiped out at a stroke all the results of his ten-year struggle for easing the tax burdens on wealth. President Hoover's defeat brought to an end not only Mr. Mellon's brief excursion into international diplomacy but his political career. However, the Fortune Goes Marching On."

What has all this to do with Scotland? The question is how many fortunes with even less-known owners are marching on through Scotland and over-controlling and

rigging all its affairs to what end? A naive question, to evoke the laughter of our hard-headed Scottish business men. There are no mystery-millionaires with immense power of that kind in Scotland. Aren't there? Not in person perhaps, but that is perhaps worse. Scotland is an old-established and wealthy country; where is its wealth if not in Scotland itself, and if it is there who is controlling it and to what ends? There is no one in Scotland who can be brought to book and this inability to fix personal responsibility is perhaps the most serious and sinister aspect of our affairs. None of our Scottish M.P.'s, none of our nobility, none of our business magnates, none of our bankers are "big men"; they are all just office-boys for their nameless masters. The names of the shareholders in the Bank of England have never been disclosed; but the Bank of England, a private corporation, is our real government and Parliament is only its servant and a mask behind which it operates. Whether these shareholders are British or not—whether their interests in the last analysis are bound up with ours or opposed to it—is not available for public consideration. It is true that we have not actually resident in Scotland any men of the Mellon type; but some of them visit us in due season to shoot grouse, stalk deer, and fish our salmon rivers—and the Cunard Company has a third of Scotland in its pocket for the gratification of their hobbies. Less is known of the "powers behind the scenes" in Scotland—of the actualities of Scottish finance and ownership and control—than of any other country in Europe. All manner of essential statistics for the purpose of determining Scotland's real position are included with English totals in official returns in a way that makes discrimination impossible. My friend, the late Mr. William Graham, complained of the extraordinary lack of economical documentation of all kinds in Scotland—the impossibility of getting hold of the necessary facts and figures. Things have not improved since his death. With regard to any other country in Europe it is possible to get hold of good up-to-date books surveying the national position, either comprehensively or in respect of some or other of its phases. Nothing of the sort is possible in respect of Scotland. There is no such book. And in all other European countries the leading newspapers give from time to time solidly informative and often brilliantly constructive

articles from the pens of well-known and responsible publicists, economists, sociologists, and other reputed authorities and experts on the various phases of the national economy, governmental policy, and kindred matters. The files of the leading Scottish newspapers will be ransacked in vain for any useful—however intellectually inferior—equivalent to these. This lack of serious concern with Scottish affairs in our journalism is no accident. The newspapers in question are journalistically just as well organized as the leading papers in other countries; they are staffed by writers quite as competent or could speedily have at their service trained researchers and scientific analysts of public affairs of all kinds of a calibre equal to those available in other countries. But it is not done. Why?

I am not endeavouring to create a "war scare" but simply commenting on an extraordinary fact of contemporary Scottish journalism and asking for information on a very curious concatenation of circumstances when I go on to point out that at the very time when, owing to the alleged economic slump, economy has been the order of the day and all manner of urgent and highly desirable public schemes have had to be delayed or abandoned, other public schemes costing immensely more, serving no immediate purpose either commensurate with their cost or entitling them to priority over the many delayed or abandoned schemes, and even incomprehensible altogether on the grounds officially put forward for proceeding with them, have been carried through at immense cost without anything like adequate description or discussion in the Press and a very marked abstention from comment on many of their most significant features.

The evacuation of the Island of St. Kilda was a very curious matter. St. Kilda, as Professor Mathieson has shown, is perhaps the most fertile island in the whole of Europe and, given proper methods, could feed all Glasgow, while it could also have been the centre of a prosperous fine wool industry. It is not impossible that its otherwise incomprehensible, and totally unnecessary and unjustifiable evacuation, is accounted for by reasons of "higher policy" of which the public knows nothing and even the Press only enough to take the hint and say nothing. It is another curious fact that all the great new roads laid down

through deserted countrysides at this time of national economy at immense cost link themselves up in a way that could not be better if they were designed for military purposes. Stranraer, Greenock, Oban and Skye, towards all of which points they ramify, are, of course, sea-plane bases; and then there are the concealed oil-tanks in the Vale of Leven. There is the significance too of the new Harland-Wolff yard and the adjacent torpedo-factory; its acquirement was in singular contrast to the rationalization policy that was simultaneously being carried out on the lower reaches of the Clyde. It is not my purpose to go in detail into all these inter-related facts which, taken singly, as the newspapers have taken care to report them, convey little but which in relation to each other all point in one direction and manifest themselves as part and parcel of a huge concerted plan of some kind—whatever the end may be to which it is directed. There is also the fact that these enormous roads (catering for no existing requirements and no prospective requirements of any ordinary commercial, industrial, or public utility character, and carried through with Government grants of a magnitude—sometimes the entire 100 per cent—which would not have been forthcoming for any normal undertakings) were carefully constructed to bypass all the large towns and in other cases, as in the Glencoe Road, had concealed glen-bottom construction, or, as in the Stranraer Road, were carefully laid inland. It would require a map to bring out the relationship of these little-known ramifications to such things as the Kinlochleven Aluminium factory or certain constructions on the west of Skye; and I should have to go into the matter far more fully than is my purpose at the moment to bring out what I conceive to be the relationship between the entire scheme and the Carburetted Water Gas question in Glasgow, the provision of steel police boxes in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and elsewhere, and the recently-intensified efforts of all kinds to make Scotland air-minded. It is noteworthy, at all events, that there were simultaneous with these undertakings a series of visits of French, Japanese, and other military experts to the west of Scotland, a territory which so far as the vast majority of Scotsmen know—and hope!—contains nothing germane to the business of such missions. I am personally most interested in the possible prevision in relation to all this of the denudation of

the Highlands of Scotland, the dead-lettering in actual practice of all the Land Settlement schemes (which Parliament put on the statute-book and for which there have always been plenty of eminently suitable—but nevertheless rejected—applicants), and the now much-debated Southern trend of industry and the consequent location of the workers in the industries concerned in the South of England at the safest possible remove from this portentous West of Scotland net-work—whatever its aims and objects may be.

Two things are certain. The schemes have involved a series of huge and costly undertakings which were not called for by any of the present interests or prospective developments of legitimate Scottish industry or commerce and none of them were provided as the result of the agitation of Scottish public bodies or the general public—but were all "decided upon from above"; while what the public bodies, the general public and the legitimate interests of Scottish industry and commerce called for were either refused, delayed, or whittled down to a mere nothing on the specious plea of the need for economy.

The second certainty is that no matter what the meaning of these provisions may be, no matter how obnoxious to the Scottish public, in this case as in many others of far less consequence it would inevitably be found that, as Sir Ian Macpherson, M.P., recently put it, writing from bitter experience, in an article in *The Spectator:* "A united and vigorous protest by members of all parties from Scotland has little or no effect." *The Spectator* itself observed that "the case for giving Scotland far larger control over her own affairs is very nearly unanswerable." But the real reason why no progress is made with the movement may have to do with considerations of "higher policy" which do not come within the sphere of ordinary politics at all but—reason or no reason—have ways and means of securing that what they want to happen happens and vice versa, either without the public knowing anything about it or being led to believe precisely what it wants them to believe.

II

The Manchester Guardian (it may be noted that any papers or periodicals I quote in relation to Scottish affairs

are never the leading Scottish dailies—which, as I shall show, have always been and remain utterly untrustworthy on such matters) in a recent special article on "Nationalism in the Scottish Arts" said: "One way and another the tendency in Scotland, in the arts as in politics, is to escape from the Empire into the less adequately disciplined state that is called European. The writer's escape is the most difficult to compass: from birth the lad of parts is overlaid by the example and influence of the mighty English models. (Neither a bad influence, nor a bad example, one would think: but *modern Scotland will never be understood until its desire to resume an identity distinct from that of England is appreciated.*) But he seeks continually to contrive it, as the young musician of the day, with a very small national tradition behind him, can so easily do and competently does, and as the young painter or sculptor does as a racial habit. It is certainly not through England that the more recent influences on our composers and painters have come."

The aim of the Scottish Movement, cultural and political, as entertained and promulgated by those who initiated it, could not be more succinctly and accurately defined than in the sentence I have italicized in the above quotation. What has been achieved? Let me take the literary side first. It must be frankly admitted at the outset that though all of them are conscious of it and most of them definitely sympathetic to it the great majority of the writers involved have not succeeded in embodying that italicized principle effectively in their work; the reasons being to do so would not only involve difficulties in the reorientation of their own spirits and interests and an arduous concentration on the discovery of new techniques of expression but it would part them from any established public and demand an abandonment of that refusal of a higher order of perception which is second nature to most of them. That said by way of preliminary qualification, I can proceed to consider the actual position.

Is the Scottish Renaissance a reality? The phrase "Scottish Renaissance Group" was applied first of all by Professor Denis Saurat, in an article he wrote in a French review, to the group associated with me in "Northern Numbers" and "The Scottish Chapbook." What has happened during the interval? The term "Scottish

Renaissance" has been wrested away from its original significance and applied loosely to all manner of activities directed towards a "national awakening." I deprecate the confusion that has thus been caused. My purpose here is not to deal with the existence or prospects of a Scottish Renaissance in that wider sense, but to claim that on the lines initiated or suggested by the group to whom the phrase was originally applied a genuine movement (apart from the qualifications I made above) has developed and now has a considerable achievement to its credit. The programme that was announced ten years ago was that the time had come to develop a literature based not on Scotland's affinities with England but its differences from England; that to do this involved a thorough revaluation of our literary past and a species of psychological *kulturkampf;* and that among our main tasks must be a systematic exploration of the creative possibilities of Braid Scots and a recapture of our lost Gaelic background. Many other points emerged almost at once, but these were, roughly stated, the main lines of the proposed development. To what extent have they been realized?

The process of revaluation has been exemplified in such books as Mrs. Carswell's "Robert Burns", Donald Carswell's "Brither Scots" and "Sir Walter Scott", Edwin Muir's "John Knox", George Malcolm Thomson's "Caledonia", "The Rediscovery of Scotland", and "Short History of Scotland", the symposium, "Scotland in Quest of her Youth", edited by David Cleghorn Thomson (the contributors to which were, in addition to Mr. Thomson himself, George Blake, James Bridie, Catherine Carswell, Will. Y. Darling, Neil Gunn, Thomas Henderson, Robert Hurd, J. Inglis Ker, Eric Linklater, Compton Mackenzie, George F. Macleod, Moray Maclaren, Naomi Mitchison and George Scott Moncrieff—most of whom are sympathetic to the programme outlined above, though Mr. Bridie cannot be considered to be so), the valuable research work in Scottish history (which has completely altered many time-honoured conceptions) of Dr. George Pratt Insh, Dr. Edith MacQueen, Dr. A. A. W. Ramsay, Miss Irene Dean, Miss F. Marion MacNeill, Major Hay, and others, the books, pamphlets, and innumerable journalistic writings of the Hon. Ruaraith Erskine of Marr, William Power, William Bell, A. Dewar Gibb, John Macnair Reid. Dr.

Reinald Hoops (in German), Moray Maclaren, T. Douglas MacDonald ("Fionn MacColla"), R. M. Black, George Dott, Ian Gillies, A. T. Cunningham, James H. Whyte, William Souter, myself, and others, together with the activities of the Scottish centre of the P.E.N. Club (which has now a total of 164 members, including a Gaelic section of 24 members), together with the occasional speeches of people like Compton Mackenzie, Cunninghame Graham, and Naomi Mitchison.

Whatever may be any reader's view of the justice of revaluations conducted in this direction or that, it can scarcely be denied that the net result has been new and fruitful angles of approach and an increase in the vital interest and contemporary applicability of the subjects involved. That indeed was foreseen and one of the main objects of the movement. The necessity of being provocative was realized and, if it has been carried too far in certain directions to suit all tastes, it has on the whole abundantly justified itself. Amongst other things it has brought out a far sharper realization of the Scottish tradition as a whole and its differences from the English tradition. If Scott and Burns have been "attacked" they have also been defended, and the discussions evoked have concentrated more and more on vital issues. In my view the whole process has merely begun, but in the attack on the Burns cult, the call for a return to Dunbar, the insistence upon the necessity of an all-in view of Scottish Literature which will not exclude the great Gaelic poets on the one hand nor on the other Scottish writers who are too commonly regarded rather as part and parcel of English literature or who have never got their due (I am referring to men like John Davidson and James Thomson, "B.V.") because our leading papers and other agencies were disproportionately in the hands of conservatives interested in maintaining certain conventions to which such writers were opposed and in perpetuating the provincialization of Scotland by the continual laudation of petty scribblers belonging to the "Kailyaird tradition" which was the official policy, in the research work proceeding in many directions, and in the increased thinking about Scottish cultural and psychological matters of all kinds, a very marked and many-sided development has been registered, which will have definite bearings on the future of Scottish

consciousness. Mr. William Power has indicated that its influence may go a great deal further. "English would have become effete in Victorian days," he says, "but for the influence of a Europeanized Scot, Thomas Carlyle. But since the War it has been in full decadence. America is evolving a lingo of her own, of an inferior type, which Canada will stolidly imitate. England's rustic sap is dried up, and big business and the Bright Young Things are making sawdust of the tree of English speech. English of the English may disintegrate. Scotland will be well advised, therefore, to bring up her rich reserves of Doric vernacular, and to take over what she can from Gaelic. She may have to reinforce English very heavily. She might even have to re-create it. In any case, she will find it necessary to supply much more than the mere soupçon of an exotic flavouring."

There is no need to discuss some of the deeper issues that have been touched upon—the relations of politics and economics to culture; the profit of Scotland's attachment to England, Europe, and the Empire respectively; the search for a master idea or sense of a historical national mission which will bring Scottish genius right into the mainstream of modern consciousness; the difficult problems of the relation of speech to psychology; the call for an effective re-Scoticization of our educational system; the concern with the problems and potentialities of religion in Scotland, and so on. All these considerations are at work. It is difficult to get a clear view of such a complex process, let alone—even if that were desirable—embody it in any definitely organized fashion. The time for national synthesis is not yet. We are still more concerned with the breakdown of old traditions than with the consolidation of new.

This is inevitable. But it is a profound mistake to regard the process as merely or mainly destructive. The necessity for it largely arose from the gulf between the old traditions and the actual conditions and prospects of Scotland to-day; and, from a cultural standpoint at least, if not from a politico-economic one too, its ample justification lay in the paucity of creative output in the period of Scottish history dominated by the ideas that are now being so comprehensively, if insidiously, assailed.

Leaving these deeper issues to look after themselves, the heightened national consciousness, the "return to Scotland"

spirit, the new creative use of the vernacular and Gaelic backgrounds linguistically and otherwise, the sense of a separate Scottish tradition with a continuity of its own and qualities and potentialities very different from that of the English tradition, are all exemplified in the new Scottish novelists. Here we can join issue at once with any Didymus who wants to put his finger on the spot. It is not a question of permanent or relative value of these novels, but of their increasing number and the very definite tendencies they represent. They all stem directly and obviously from one or more of the planks of the original renaissance programme I have outlined above, and most of them are thesis-novels, very markedly propagandist of "the new Scotland." This alone proves the creative impetus the programme supplied. Apart from propaganda of ideas or questions of comparative value, what can be very definitely maintained is that Scotland never at any previous time possessed so numerous a corps of novelists; that the general level of its novelistic ability was never higher; and that the "native content" of its novels was never greater or keener. Whether in a purely literary sense the new Scottish novel is entering upon a distinctive evolution, and how it compares in technique, quality and tendency with the novel in England, Ireland, and elsewhere to-day are questions not essential to my immediate purpose; but in such writers as Neil Gunn, George Blake, Adam Kennedy, "Fionn MacColla", Lewis Grassic Gibbon, Edwin Muir, Willa Muir, March Cost, N. Bryson Morrison, Bruce Marshall, Edward Albert, Eric Linklater, George Scott Moncrieff, and others we have at least a remarkable number of young novelists, reconcentrating on Scottish life, landscape, language, history, and prospects in an unprecedented fashion and all manifesting in this measure or that some aspect or other of the renaissance programme as originally defined.

The same thing is true, but to a much smaller degree, of poetry. We have far fewer poets of any quality than we have prose-writers; the majority of them are less at variance with established traditions, less sharply differentiated from their English equivalents, less united in a common concern for one or other of the Renaissance desiderata, less important in a purely literary sense, less influential with the reading public, and less productive even of their own work, such as it is. Nevertheless good work has been and is being

done, although it is disappointing (but perhaps inevitable because of the sheer difficulty of the task) to find that such new trails as have been blazed are not being followed up and that few, if any, young poets under, say, thirty are treading on the heels of those a little over that age who have secured some small reputation.

It is in drama as it is in poetry, though here again a small body of definite achievement may be claimed, and the point stressed that whereas Scotland had at least some novelistic and poetic past it had no dramatic one, so that even the little that has accrued has at least a special pioneer value.

Ten years after all is not long in the history of any literary development, and especially one that in any way preludes, and is dependent upon, a national "change of heart", and Scotland has nothing to grumble about in this connection. The Irish literary revival, the *Aufklarung* in Germany, the development of the latest of all great literatures in Russia—none of these got really under way in so short a time; and in them,—as in Scotland—there had to be a long period of preparation, of the propagation of "new ideas." That process is perhaps far more apace—far more radical—in Scotland to-day than most people imagine, and its more sensational and substantive fruits may not be long delayed; but even as matters stand our ten years' showing is no mean one having regard to the previous literary productivity of our country as a whole, and will rank in our literary history as a definite turning point and a phase of much hard work, of a changing of standards, of a quest for new means, and of a certain amount of real gold.

III

In Fionn MacColla's *Cuis Na Canain*—the only thorough and comprehensive examination of the Gaelic question, and a devastating exposure of the pretensions of An Comunn Gaidhealach and other bodies—the author, dealing with the alleged facilities for the teaching of Gaelic in schools in Gaelic-speaking areas, says: "It is claimed that Gaelic is taught in 300 schools to about 10,000 children. To speak quite truthfully the Education Act of 1918 did not put Gaelic into the schools at all. It merely lifted a very small part of the ban. It did not make the language

compulsory. It did not provide means to ensure a proper standard. It made qualifications in Gaelic necessary neither for the teachers nor for inspectors and therefore it would really be more correct to say that the 1918 Act merely meant that in future the English Government undertook to look the other way should an insignificant part of the teaching week in Gaelic-speaking areas be devoted to the native language. But it must be an insignificant part. There was no question of Gaelic being put on an equality with other subjects. It remains at the bottom of the list. In the few secondary schools where provision is made for the teaching of the subject those pupils who choose to take it must reach, for purposes of the Leaving Certificate, a standard similar to that set for foreign and dead languages. But there is no compulsion. So far as Gaelic is concerned Scottish education is obviously free. It is the one subject about which every pupil has the fullest liberty to please himself . . . it is taught as if it were a dead, or at any rate a foreign, language. It is taught through the medium of English. It is approached from the outside as something to be studied, not from the inside as something to be used. No other school subject is taught through the medium of Gaelic, and that is as much as to assume from the outset that Gaelic lies on the outer margin instead of at the centre of the intellectual as of the national life. That, of course, is precisely the attitude of mind which will kill the language as a living speech more quickly than anything else. It is in reality far more dangerous than simple exclusion or proscription, because such treatment would suggest at least that Gaelic appertained to a scheme of things irreconcilable with and opposed at all points to the present established system, *and for that very reason alternative to it.* Whereas the presence of Gaelic is an insignificant item on the curriculum—because it considers that language as a fossil to be studied from the outside in academic fashion instead of a living medium through which the world of knowledge is to be approached—represents a thoroughly dangerous state of affairs; it threatens the mind with the peculiar subtlety of all counterfeits and attempts to seduce the assent of Gaelic youth to what appears to be a compromise and is in reality a capitulation. To accept it means something thoroughly pleasing to those, our rulers, who intend the extinction of Scottish culture

and autonomy; it means to surrender our language as a living and dynamic centre of national resistance and creativity, and to receive it back as a harmless academic exercise no more likely than Latin or Sanskrit to nourish the elements of a national revolt which will overthrow present tendencies and roll the imperial tide of Englishism over the Border. When Gaelic is the medium of instruction in all subjects in every school in the Gaidhealtachd, and furthermore a compulsory second language in every other Scottish school, it will be time to think of beginning to talk of a satisfactory position in the schools. Until then our real work remains to be done."

That is clear enough, and even these active nationalists such as myself who are personally most concerned with Braid Scots, are entirely at one with Mr. MacColla and "out for" compulsory Gaelic throughout Scotland. We desire that Braid Scots and the literature in it should be a subject in Scottish schools and Universities, at all events outside the Gaidhealtachd. The Burns Federation and the Burns Clubs generally play the same false role in regard to Braid Scots as An Comunn Gaidhealach does to Gaelic. They have consistently dissociated themselves from the new creative tendencies in Braid Scots and continue to adscript themselves to a kailyaird level which is beneath intelligent consideration. There are other Scottish societies which play a similar role. One of these is the Scottish Text Society. At the recent Jubilee Celebration of this Society, the principal speaker, Dr. George Gordon, President of Magdalen College, Oxford, "paid a tribute to the influence which the society had had in bringing the Scottish Universities to an appreciation of the importance of early Scottish literature. They had done more than move the Universities. He considered that they had brought the early Scottish poets into the schools of Scotland. He found among the youngest Scottish poets, and increasingly among them, an extraordinary interesting attempt to extract from Dunbar, Henryson, and the other great poets a richer Scots than was now current in speech or writing. Mr. C. M. Grieve ('Hugh MacDiarmid') had produced what might be called a synthetic Scots which to any student of Dunbar, Henryson or Douglas was an artistically entrancing sort of Scots, whether practicable or not, as interesting in its way as Doughty's experiment of using

Elizabethan language in the nineteenth century. There was just a danger to-day from the habit of specialization that learned societies should cut themselves entirely away from the young men who were producing the literature of their own time. He delighted to see those young men using the society's books, not merely to acquire learning, but to acquire material and inspiration for their own contemporary art."

The reply to this—noting in passing the tacit admission that the members of these learned societies do not themselves produce the literature of their own time—is that I know almost every contemporary Scottish writer intimately and know of none who has used or has even had access to the Society's books in the way indicated. Personally I have never handled or so much as seen one of the books in question. To-day as always the Scottish writers who are doing any really good work are not able to afford membership of such a society or procure copies of its books. Although at Edinburgh University—and perhaps at some of the others—there has been a slight stirring of interest in early Scottish literature, it is certainly not the case that there is any real teaching of Scottish literature or of the Braid Scots language or of Scottish history or any other Scottish subject in any Scottish school. Lord Macmillan, who presided over this Jubilee Celebration, congratulated the Society on its work and expressed the belief that a true spirit of nationalism could find its outcome in efforts of that sort—perhaps more valuable, perhaps better than in other directions. No doubt Lord Macmillan is anxious that we should not concern ourselves with real affairs and take any great interest in economic questions and, in particular, the proposals of Major C. H. Douglas. But we are not to be fobbed off on genteel hobbies in that way; our nationalism involves every aspect of Scottish art and affairs. Lord Macmillan's suggestion is a familiar one; we have encountered it before in the guise of a pretence to distinguish between cultural and political nationalism and approve the former and disapprove the latter; one of the common forms it takes is the insistence that poets should be wholly divorced from realities, especially politico-economic realities, and produce in a blissful vacuum with no concern for the crucial problems of their country. In a word, we are alive to all these old dodges—and fully

aware that the apparent extension of publicity and some measure of sympathy to the Scottish movement on the part of the leading Scottish papers is only a variant of them, just as the great majority of those who are now associated with such bodies as the Scottish Party and the National Party of Scotland, instead of adhering to the aim expressed in the italicized phrase in the second section of this essay, are equally concerned to manœuvre the whole affair into decent limits, as amenable to the existing order as the farcical facilities given for the teaching of Gaelic are. They are seeking to substitute ordinary political cant, cheap journalese, and "ballyhoo" for the determined quest for fundamentals with which the movement started. But their seeming success is only an illusion produced by the same organs to whom the wish is father to the thought (and which have never been any guide to Scottish affairs—witness their unanimous opposition to the Socialist Movement which in 1923 nevertheless secured not only the majority of the Scottish seats but a clear majority of the total Scottish poll); the realities of the Scottish political situation lie in a very different direction.

The emergence of the new Scottish Movement a few years ago showed that all our leading papers had pursued a wellnigh incredible policy, amounting to a conspiracy of silence, with regard to the crucial facts of Scottish affairs of all kinds and our national position *vis-à-vis* England and relative to other smaller European countries. The time has not yet come for me to write my autobiography but when that time does come I shall have very astonishing facts to relate as to the impossibility we experienced for several years in "putting across" certain extremely important if elementary facts, the extraordinary censorship that was exercised by all the leading Scottish newspapers, the pressure that was put upon us to desist from our propaganda, and the means whereby we finally got behind the backs of the dailies—and their ubiquitous allies in the schools and universities, in the pulpits and on the platforms; and utilizing the local weekly papers dinned home the vital facts in an output of some four columns of "matter" used by an average of about thirty papers all over Scotland for a period of four years. That is the main fact that lies behind the Scottish Movement. The confusion as to what is happening now is due to the fact that in all

important respects nothing that is appearing in the Scottish dailies has any significance in relation to the Movement but a similar slow, patient, subterranean policy of education is being pursued, and has still a very long way to go—as can readily be imagined in view of the complete absence of any grounding in Scottish subjects in the Scottish schools. While the dailies and Scots of all parties can no longer, if directly challenged, deny the facts that were forced into the open in this way, they contrive for the most part to act as if they were not true or were susceptible of solution along lines that have long been urged but never applied and which show no more likelihood of being applied to-day than they did fifty years ago. Again, these particular facts were only the very A.B.C. of the movement Scotland requires, and it is proving even more difficult to teach the remaining letters of the alphabet, let alone how these may be combined into effective forms of national expression. The whole powers of certain types of journalism in Scotland are concentrated now on ensuring that the few basic facts I refer to shall act as if the "saturation level" of the Scottish public in regard to Scottish questions had been reached, and on preventing any real assimilation of their significance. The apparent infection of a section of the Scottish Press by our propaganda is only an even deadlier opposition to it than we encountered before, carried on by the very same people who a very few years ago denied the facts in question and subjected those of us who insisted upon promulgating them to all sorts of misrepresentations and victimization. The leopards have not changed their spots. They have still the same mental background that was responsible for the amazing neglect of Scottish affairs, and they are conjuring out of it petty schemes which are utterly inadequate to Scottish requirements and which depend entirely for any currency they acquire upon continued success in preventing the general public getting to know any more about the true facts than what little has so far been forced through in the manner described. The Scottish Party, headed by the Duke of Montrose and Sir Alexander McEwan, entirely consists of people of that sort and has as its sole object the confining of the Scottish Movement within the narrowest possible limits and with the least possible discomfort to the existing order. The National Party of Scotland had attempted, on the other

hand, to stand pat on the few basic facts I mention, but to prevent any further disclosures or any realization of the connection of these few basic facts to a whole range of other considerations; but it has now abandoned even that effort and is fused with the Scottish Party. Neither of these parties, nor any of the newspapers have initiated anything like a thorough national survey or stocktaking; there is nothing they are more anxious to avoid. Even their leading personnel are men of a calibre far below that required to become influential in any of the older parties; most of them were in fact connected with the older parties and failed to achieve even petty local significance. They include no intellectuals, and their "literature" is incredibly puerile. They are, in fact, so far from being Scottish Nationalists in any true sense of the term that it is precisely their psychological types, this footling mentality, which Scotland requires to transcend altogether before it can launch any thorough-going movement commensurate with its grave needs. The thought of any of these men representing Scotland in an international conference, with the statesmen of other nations, is simply *pour rire*. It is not difficult to see why newspapers who have always opposed the Scottish Movement tooth and nail are treating these men as real leaders, and treating the real leaders as impossible extremists. These parties and the newspapers are dependent entirely upon subversions of the material which formed the basis of the original movement; they have done no independent research and a study of the files will show any student that the earlier propaganda conducted in the local weekly papers and in the short-lived organs of the Movement was infinitely superior in its grip of Scottish realities, its powers of co-ordination, its range of knowledge of tendencies in world affairs and European affairs in particular and their bearing upon Scotland, and its proleptic faculty than anything that has been produced by these parties or by the national Press. The partial recognition of the Movement has in fact gone hand in hand with a progressive deterioration—as was inevitable. Those who succumbed to, or profited by, this were not of the type to appreciate the necessity of being wary of the Greeks bringing gifts.

In the meanwhile the real driving force behind the whole Movement is operating in an entirely different

direction and is fully alive to the dangers of premature publicity and premature formulation of policy and adequately safeguarded against both. The reality of the Scottish situation lies with it; it will keep the ferment going and resist every effort to "crystallize out" before fundamentals—the *Ur-motives* of the Scottish genius—have been fully reckoned with. It knows the paltry character of the "literature" yet produced and the superficial and inadequate character of the issues that have yet emerged into public discussion and journalistic recognition. It knows that the great majority of those who have acquired a certain prominence in the Scottish Party and the National Party of Scotland even have done so on the strength of the very sketchiest knowledge of our interests in Scottish arts and affairs and that none of them have given to any single Scottish issue anything like that degree of study that is required to take a Leaving Certificate in any subject in a Scottish school. Happily, the needs and potentialities of Scotland are not to be realized on the strength of a few cheap journalistic snippets of information and a few pious catch-phrases, nor can the destinies of the new Scotland possibly be with those who have neither the ability nor the desire to de-Anglicize their own minds and belatedly make up for the defects of their education in relation to Scottish matters of every kind.

The explanation of the present public appearance of the Movement, so utterly at variance with the true state of affairs, is no new one in the history of such politico-cultural movements; it is simply that—as the inevitable result of progressive anglicization and provincialization, and as a psychological "compensation" for the birthright they have betrayed—the vast majority of the Scottish people, and particularly their "public men", are "more English than the English". The "nationalist stunt" in the Scottish dailies is significantly at variance with the sales—in Scotland—of the books of the new Scottish writers, and, in view of the attempts that are constantly being made to distinguish between cultural and political nationalism, it may be pointed out that none of the Scottish dailies afford a platform for any of the younger Scottish writers of merit. None of the good work that has been produced by the new Scottish Literary Movement—whether in the form of poems, fiction, essays, literary criticism, or anything else—

has appeared in any of these quarters which are still "thirled", in so far as they publish Scottish magazine matter at all, to the old Kailyaird guff which has no correspondence to Scottish realities and against which the new Movement is a long-overdue protest. All these younger Scottish writers are dependent upon English periodicals, almost all of them upon English publishers, and most of them only to a negligible extent even upon Scottish readers. These facts brook no denial and cast a sufficient light on the attitude of the Scottish papers (which could obtain this material quite as cheaply as the relatively worthless stuff they publish) alike to cultural and political nationalism. It is impossible that such a state of affairs can continue indefinitely in any country—the day of reckoning will assuredly come—nor will it be long in coming now so far as Scotland is concerned.

§ 3.

NEWSREEL

Some attempts have been made to equate the Scythians with the Scots but we are faced with seemingly insuperable difficulties

R. L. Cassie in *The Weekly Scotsman.*

It has often been said that Scotsmen have many characteristics in common with Jews, but the similarity is seen by most people in relation to things practical and mundane.

Rabbi Salis Daiches in the *Scots Magazine.*

Wallace may not have been couthie nor Bruce pawky but what about Burns and Scott and Eric Linklater?

George Brown in the *Glasgow Daily Herald.*

The gigantic statue to Wallace, near Dryburgh, is once again being discussed, the trees having obscured it as a landmark. 21½ feet high, it was placed on its pedestal on September 22, 1814, and its elevated position made it visible from Berwick, 30 miles away. Designed by a self-taught sculptor it has been criticized as inartistic and full of anachronisms.

The Weekly Scotsman.

The first known exhibition of Scottish linen was an unqualified success. Clad in "shirts, smocks, and other

white linens, atop upon their usual garments", and flourishing towels and napkins on staves and spears, the carters, wainmen, servants and women, with much shouting and show, poured over the hillside, causing the complete rout of Edward's troops at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314, which proves, that in spite of the stated complete illiteracy of the Scots and their wild barbaric ways, they seem to have mastered the art of weaving in very early times.

Edinburgh Evening News.

We have had to bear with some tragic attempts at the filming of Scottish history. There was one that dealt with Mary Queen of Scots, where that lady paraded in a Glengarry and a very abbreviated kilt.

Scots Magazine.

It was a romantic moment when the Duke of York stood by the grave of Flora MacDonald in Skye, but the whirligig of time never moved more eccentrically than when, on Thursday, His Royal Highness and his Duchess were taken over the battlefield of Culloden.

Glasgow Evening News.

Scotland, like other countries, has always had persons of the Menteith and Titus Oates type, and yet the earth keeps revolving as usual.

John Bell in the *Glasgow Daily Herald.*

Sir Ian Colquhoun, in reply, said he had no philosophy of life.

Scotsman.

It is significant of the trend of Scottish opinion that the *Daily Record's* pronouncements should have been immediately followed by the appearance of a book in which Sir Alexander Malcolm MacEwan, exProvost of Inverness, one of the acknowledged leaders of modern Scotland, sets forth views and arguments which in essence are identical with those that have been advanced in these columns.

Glasgow Daily Record.

For the Scots vernacular two-thirds of the adult population do not, as Pet Majorie would have put it, "give a single damn". Our vernacular means as much to them as the language of Ossian or "Beowulf." They are quite happy in their imagined possession of the tongue of Al Capone.

William Power in the *Glasgow Evening News.*

Gaelic is dropping more and more into the background as decade follows decade. Dropping into the background it is. The case cannot well be otherwise for its people are thinning out in the homeland, the schools that teach it thoroughly are few and far between, and most churches have, perforce, to close their doors against it or else to relegate it to a time which will not clash with other interests. Poor Gaelic! It can no longer boast of a clientele of its own among the well-to-do and the fashionable, for these tolerate it only for gala occasion, as they do the bagpipe and the tartan.

Angus Henderson in the *Scots Observer.*

There is no doubt that Leezie Lindsay, when popped the question, "Will ye gang to the Hielan's?", if she had ever had any doubts, capitulated at once on remembering the rose-coloured and blue tweeds of Harris and the amethyst tweeds of Sutherland. For there is one thing about being poor in the Highlands—you can dress on next to nothing to give the impression that Bond Street looks after you as one of its own.

Olive Fraser in the *Glasgow Daily Record.*

The clan spirit is part of the make-up of the true Highlander. It is part of the warp and woof of his very being. The clan spirit stood for fights and feuds and forays but it also stood for glamour, romance and loyalty. Particularly in an age of drabness and materialism, a depressing and disappointing time, anything relating to the spirit, as did the clan spirit, is deserving of the heartiest support and encouragement and indeed makes for the uplift of all who are connected with it. Lord Alness in *The Scotsman.*

It is amazing how one finds the Scots to be all over the world. This is not so surprising in countries where Scots abound, but it is somewhat remarkable in those lands which have few Scots. Professor Thomas MacCallum, of the University of Vienna, speaking half in English and half in German, used to keep Austrian audiences in fits with jokes about Scottish things. He was also probably the most popular wireless speaker in Austria, where he indulged the same form of humour. But one discovers the joke in Indian and Chinese papers, and in America whenever a comedian is hard pressed for a laugh he has only to begin:

"Once there was a Scotsman", and the audience will rise to him as surely as political meetings used to burst into cheers at the mention of Gladstone's name.

Scots Observer.

There is a romance about a successful centre-forward which players in other positions find it almost impossible to simulate. In post-war years, up to the end of last season, Scotland played in all 42 international matches, of which 28 were won, 6 drawn, and only 8 matches lost. That represents very consistent work and much of the success may be attributed to the fact that for nearly every one of these games, there was a really outstanding centre-forward available.

"Custodian" in *The Weekly Scotsman.*

The Firth of Forth and the Fife seaboard have been the scene of experimental war operations in which aerial and naval co-operation have been developed in a greater degree than hitherto. It is a little disturbing to hear reports that the operations have been watched by German observers, but the Admiralty may be trusted to probe such reports to the bottom and fix responsibility, if any, in the right quarter.

The Weekly Scotsman.

It is a common matter of complaint amongst unthinking people that the Scottish Nationalist Movement is led, not by "hard-headed business people" but by novelists and poets. The fact remains that that has been true of most of the vital movements in history, and I think the truth of the matter lay with a very shrewd and experienced observer who remarked to me after the recent big Usher Hall demonstration of the National Party of Scotland that it was "far too tame—what was wanted was more fireworks; fewer commonplace speakers and more genuine personality."

Edinburgh Evening News.

Visitors who come to Scotland are always surprised; they are under the impression that the bagpipes are very common. But what do we find? When we do hear the pipes played it causes great excitement. If it were not for kilted regiments with their pipe bands we would not know that there was such a thing as a bagpipe.

Imp. in *The Weekly Scotsman.*

In the past ten years the population of England has increased by 2,000,000; Scotland, with one-eighth the population, has decreased by 40,000. This summer I passed over mile upon mile of road in Sutherland without seeing a single human being or habitation. I shall be told that the land is too poor to support population. To which I answer that the land I saw in Ontario was still poorer.

George Dott in *The Scotsman.*

It is most emphatically not our aim to build up a race of misers. J. Maxtone Graham C.A. in *The Scotsman.*

The last decade has completely arrested Scotland's progress. Have we to accept defeat; or are we once more under national leaders to sound the advance? Were there any signs of Scottish leadership in the House of Commons debate last night? Use the most powerful microscope in search of traces of a lead to the new day and it will not be found. The Lure of London tells. Even hardy Radicals who have gone South have been sicklied o'er with the pale cast of Whiggism. The London atmosphere is politically enervating, and the fleshpots of Whitehall are too much for men who sing "Scots wha ha'e" once a year on Burns night. *Edinburgh Evening News.*

Take the stomach of a sheep and wash it well. Leave it to soak for several hours in cold, salt water. Then turn out and pour scalding water on it and scrape with a knife. Leave in hot water till wanted. Now clean a sheep's pluck well. Pierce the heart and liver in several places, then boil the liver and lights for an hour and a half. When these have boiled for 15 minutes change the water, and during the last half-hour let the pluck be boiled with them. Trim away the skins and discard any discoloured parts. Grate half the liver and mince all the rest finely. Add a pound of finely shredded meat, two chopped onions, half a nutmeg, grated, and a pinch of cayenne pepper. Moisten with half a pint of good gravy and juice of small lemon. Put the mixture into the bag prepared for it. Allow for swelling in cooking. Sew up securely and plunge into boiling water. Boil gently for three hours. Prick at times with a needle to let air out. Serve hot at once.

The Weekly Scotsman.

SECTION THE SECOND

§ 1. Poem — Hugh MacDiarmid

IN THE CALEDONIAN FOREST

(For Graham and Chryssie)

The geoselenic gimbal that moving makes
A gerbe now of this tree now of that
Or glomerates the whole earth in a galanty-show
Against the full moon caught
Suddenly threw a fuscous halation round a druxy dryad
Lying among the fumet in this dwale wood
As brooding on Scotland's indecrassifiable race
I wandered again in a hemicranic mood.

She did not change her epirhizous posture
But looked at me steadily with Hammochrysos eyes
While I wondered what dulia might be her due
And from what her curious enanthesis might arise,
And then I knew against that frampold background
This freaked and forlorn creature was indeed
With her great shadowed gastrocnemius and desipient face
The symbol of the flawed genius of our exeredated breed.

As in antichthon there among the apoproegmena
A quatr' occhi for a long time we stood
While like a kind of springhalt or chorea
The moonshine flickered in the silent wood,
Or like my own aporia externalized,
For her too slight kenosis made it impossible for me to woo
This outcast Muse, or urge the long-lost cause we might advance even yet
Conjunctis viribus, or seek to serve her, save thus ek parergou.

II

They are not endless these variations of form
Though it is perhaps impossible to see them all.
It is certainly impossible to conceive one that doesn't exist.
But I still keep trying to do both of these
And though it is a long time now since I saw a new one
I am by no means weary yet of my concentration
On phyllotaxis here in preference to all else,
All else—but my sense of sny.

The gold edging of a bough at sunset, its pantile way
Forming a double curve, tegula and imbrex in one,
Seems at times a movement on which I might be borne
Happy to infinity; but again I am glad
When it suddenly ceases and I find myself
Pursuing no longer a rhythm of duramen
But bouncing on the diploe in a clearing between earth and air
Or headlong in dewy dallops or a moon-spairged fernshaw
Or caught in a dark dumosity or even
In open country watching an aching spargosis of stars.

III

Only a sheep's fodder bush and a screw pine
And a dark sea going by at a piaffer
And a little palæocrystic light keeping watch
Through the phengites of this panopticon
On mankind in the last stages of pellagra.

Now the light, the paxwax of infinity,
Becomes rigid as a bar of iron.
No phosphene or photopsia any longer
Can supplement or supplant it, and in vain
A voice still cries "Ephyphatha" which means nothing
In the poor pasilaly of all other sound
Which is no more than a rattle of broken bones
Against the invisible pamphract of God.

§ 2. Short Story Lewis Grassic Gibbon

GREENDEN

Folk laughed when they heard of the creatures coming to sit them down in the farm of Greenden that lay west of the Tulloch by Bervie Water. It was a forty-fifty acre place, the Den, wet in the bottom as well it might be so low it lay there in its woods. In the midst stood the biggings; they were old and right dark: from the kitchen door you looked round and up at a jungle, near, lost from the world, so close around and between the trees the broom plants grew, and the whins. But when night came sometimes over the trees and the rank, wild waste of the moor you'd see through a narrow pass in the woods the last of the sun as it kindled a light on the Grampian Hills and went off to its bed. And that light in the mirk was near as much as a man would see of the world outby from the kitchen door of Greenden.

Well, old Grant had farmed there till he died, a steady old stock—fair strong in the hands if weak in the head, was the speak of Murdoch of Mains. For a body hardly ever made out what he said; he would whisper and whisper, whispering even as he girned at his horse in the lithe of the woods that watched Greenden. Soon's he'd been ta'en, the old mistress moved her into Drumlithe and took a bit cottage, and lived on his silver; and sometimes she'd say to a crony at night *It's fine to be here and with sonsy folk.* They thought at first she would miss her man; the minister came, the Free Kirk loon, he snuffled right godly and said through his nose *You'll meet him Above, Mistress Grant.* But at that she gave a kind of a start, near dropped the tea-pot, she did, when he spoke. *Will I, then? Ay, fegs, I'll confess I hadn't reckoned that.*

Well, that was the Grants gone out of Greenden, there the ill place lay as the winter wore on, not an offer the factor had for it either; a man could sweat out his guts on a better ploy than manuring the dour red clay of the Den. Syne the news went round it was let at last: the factor had let it to no farming body, but a creature from a town, from Glasgow it was; he'd never handled a plough or a graip and Murdoch at the Mains had a story about him.

For he'd driven the creature and his wife round the district, and as they went by the parks at Pittendreich they'd seen a roller of old Pittendreich's there, out in the ley the thing was lying. And the body of a woman had gleyed at the thing: *What a shame to let it get rusty, isn't it?* and looked at Murdoch like a fool of a bairn.

Folk took that through hand with a laugh here and there; some said it was surely a lie, though gey witty, for everybody knew that the Murdoch brute could lie like a tink when the mood was on him. True or not, you began to think of the creatures—Simpson the name was—that had taken Greenden and were moving in there at the February end. Ay, they'd find it a change from their Glasgow streets; they didn't know what it was to work, the dirt that came from the towns.

Well, come at last the Simpsons did to Greenden; their gear and furniture came by Bervie, and the Simpson man went there to hire two carts for the carting down of the stuff. Webster the grocer had no rounds that day and he hired out his carts and drove one himself, George Simpson the other, it was late at night when they came to the Den, down through the thick woods, larch it was there, so close the trunks that the night was dark though the light shone still out on the high road that walked by the sea. But they saw in the Den as they wound down there a lantern kindled at last in the mirk, kindled and shining from the kitchen door. And when the carts came rumbling into the close there the wife of Simpson was standing and waiting, the lantern held in her hand.

And Webster took a bit keek at the creature and half thought she must be but Simpson's daughter, no wife she looked, she was thin and slim, bonny in a way, and her eyes were kind. She laughed up at Simpson coming behind, syne smiled at the grocer, and cried up in an English-like voice: *You've been long. I thought I'd have to spend the night down here—all alone by myself in Greenden.*

Alec Webster said *Well, mistress, you'd have ta'en no ill.* And she nodded to that *I know that fine. . . . And, of course, the country's lovely to live in.* And she smiled at him like a daft-like quean. He glowered back at her, canny, slow and quiet Alec, he couldn't make head nor tail of her yet, her laugh and that quiver she hid in her laugh.

Syne he loosed and helped them in with their gear, a

great clutter of stuff they'd brought up from Glasgow, George Simpson he puffed and paiched right sore, big though he was, with a sappy big face, and a look on that face as though some childe had ta'en him a right hard kick in the dowp. But his lungs were gey bad, he told to the grocer; he'd come out to the country for his lungs, he said. And when Murdoch at Mains heard of that he said: *Faith, the creature's more like to mislay his anatomy than pick up a bit on the rigs of the Den.*

So there were the two of them settled in there, Simpson and the little bit snippet of a wife: she looked light enough for a puff of wind to blow her from the kitchen door at night when she opened that door to come out to the grocer as he drove his van down for her orders on Friday. Alec Webster was a kindly stock, and he cried *Losh, Mistress, you're not in your Glasgow now, you'll fair need to keep yourself wrapped up.* But she only laughed *I'm fine—oh listen to the trees!* And the grocer listened, and heard them sough, and turned him his head and glowered at the woods: they were just as aye they had been, he thought, why should a man stand still and listen? He asked her, Ellen Simpson, that, and keeked at her white, still stare. And she started again and smiled at him queer. *Oh, nothing. Sorry. But I can't but listen.*

Well, maybe she knew what she meant, he didn't. He sold her her orders—she fair had a lot—and drove away up the February dark; and as he was driving he heard in the dark a hoasting and hacking out there by the barn, and he thought of the Simpson childe and his lungs. Faith, he'd come to the wrong place here for his lungs; it wasn't long likely he would store the kiln.

Mistress Murdoch went down to tea at Greenden. But she couldn't abide George Simpson's mistress, the creature fair got on to her nerves with her flitting here and her tripping there, and her laugh, and the meikle eyes of her in the small doll face that she had. She said it was Simpson she pitied, poor man, with lungs like his and a wife like that, little comfort by day and less in his bed; she herself would rather sleep with a fluff of a feather than depend on *that* on a coldrife night.

And then, as daft-like a blether as ever you heard, the story got about how it was that they'd come to move up from Glasgow to Greenden toun. George Simpson himself

it was that told it one night he dropped in at the Murdoch house—he would go a bit walk there now and again and gley at the daughter, Jeannie. And the way of their moving from Glasgow had been when his lungs took bad it was plain that he wouldn't last out a long while at his clerking; he was fair for the knackers' yard, you would say. The doctors said he should leave the town, but he'd little fancy for that himself, and his wife had less: she was town-bred, and feared at the country, Ellen: or so he'd aye thought. For next Sunday he'd gone with her to their kirk, and then it was that a hymn was sung, and it fair seemed to change Ellen Simpson's mind. And the hymn was the one that begins with the words:

There is a green hill far away,
Beyond a city wall,
Where the dear Lord was crucified,
Who died to save us all.

So when the Simpsons got back to their house, Ellen Simpson had kept whispering and remembering that tune, and sudden-like she said they must leave the town; they must find a farm where George could work out in the open and mend his ill lungs.

Well, he'd hardly hear of the thing at first, as he told to the Murdochs that night at their house, he thought that work on a farm would kill him. But Ellen had set her mind on the plan, so he set about looking for a place to please her. He'd but little silver to stock up a steading, and land in the south was far overdear, but up in the Mearns he came on Greenden, its rent just inside the reach of his pouch. So he'd ta'en his wife up to see it; she'd stared, down in the hollow, and seemed half ta'en back. And then she'd said they must take it, and take it they did, and here now they were; and *she* liked it fine.

And fine well she might, the coarse creature, folk said. It wasn't her had to face up the rains of that year or the coarse ploughing of the ill red clay of Greenden. Ay, Simpson was a fine bit childe, a bit dour, but faith! he was surely a fool as well to let himself be ta'en from a fine town job out to the pleiter and soss of a farm to pleasure that creature his wife and the fancies she'd gotten from hearing a hymn in a kirk. Folk with sense knew that hymns were

just things that you sang, douce, and then you forgot the damn things.

Wet it was that spring: March came flooding in rains down the length and breadth of the guttering Howe; every night you'd hear the swash of the water if your place in the bed was next to the wall; the gulls were up from the Bervie beaches and cawing at all hours over the parks. Down in Greenden it was worse than most, and Simpson with his hoast, poor childe, might well have kept in his bed and blankets, but his creature of a wife wouldn't hear of that, laughing at him, affronting him into a rage. *Come on, now, George, the day's half dead! And it's fine, a good day for the plough.*

So out he'd to get, and out with his pair, and go slow step-stepping up and down the ley haughs that lined the deep Den. His ploughing was fair a sight for sore eyes; of a Sunday the bothy billies would come over, they'd take a bit dander down to the Den and stand and laugh as they looked at the drills, they went this way and that: *Damn't man, they've but little sense in towns!* Syne they'd hear Mistress Simpson crying to her hens, and see her, small, like a snippet of a doll, flit over the close on some errand or another, the poor Simpson childe kept to his bed on the Sundays.

Well, the spring wore on, fine planting weather came, by May the sun was blaze of heat, up and down the long Howe folk shook their heads. With a spring like this you might well depend that you'd have a summer with sleet, most-like. But it was well enough while it went, and Murdoch of Mains took a dander down to the Den now and then to see how the Simpson man fared. And faith! he'd been kept with his nose at the grind; he'd his parks as well forward as any other place. Murdoch hadn't set eyes on him near for a month, and fair got a shock as he stopped his roller and stood by to speak. He'd grown thicker and bigger, his face filled out, you could hardly see the town in him at all. Murdoch said *Ay man, you're fair a bit farmer.*

And Simpson smiled wan, right patient-like though, with his sappy red face like an ill-used nout's, and said *Maybe,* and paiched to listen at his lungs. And then he told that each night he went to his bed with a back like to break, but Ellen just laughed, she didn't know what an

illness was, he wasn't the man to fear her and tell her. So Murdoch saw fine how the thing was going, the Simpson childe working himself to his grave, with his coarse lungs, too, to please his coarse wife. There was nothing he could do in the matter, he thought, but he said they'd aye be pleased to see Simpson at Mains. He said nothing of Ellen, the bit wife, in that; there was damn the pleasure to be had in the creature: with her laugh and her listening and the flutter of her eyes she fairly got on a body's nerves.

What with rain and with heat the Den was green-lush right early that year—the grocer thought it came thicker than ever he minded—the broom stopped up the aisles of the larch that stretched up the braes from the old brown biggings of the Den. Ellen Simpson would come running out to the door as she heard the sound of his wheels on the close, and cry him good-day, and bring him the eggs, and stand still while he counted, a slow, canny childe; but once he raised his head and said: *Losh, but it's still!*

And the two of them stood there and listened in that quiet, not a sound to be heard or a thing to be seen beyond the green cup that stood listening around. And Ellen Simpson smiled white and said *Yes, it is still—and I'll take two loaves and some tea now, please.*

And Webster took a look at her: thinner she'd grown, more a wisp than ever, but still with her smile, and he liked her fine, near the only soul in the district that did. Most said she'd grown thinner with temper, faith! girning at her man to get out and start work, and him no more than an invalid, like.

Just luck she hadn't his death on her hands, and you couldn't blame him that he fell in the way, nearly every bit evening he would do it now, of taiking away over the brae from the Den to the Mains and his Murdoch friends. Jeannie Murdoch and he would flirt and would fleer—no harm in their fun, folk 'greed about that: the poor stock was no doubt in need of a laugh, him and that wife with her flutterings that fair set your hackles on edge. He was better than he'd been, he'd confess, would Simpson; all the more reason why he wanted some cheer when he came in about to his own fire at night, not aye to be listening to somebody cry: *Oh, George, do you think your lungs are near better?*

And Jeannie Murdoch would say *No, I'm sure. Sit*

you down. I'll make you a fine cup of tea. And George Simpson would laugh out his big, sappy laugh *Faith! you're fine as you're bonny, Jean, lass.*

And Murdoch and his mistress would hear them and gley, Mistress Murdoch pull down her meikle bit face; maybe she thought Jeannie went over far with a man that was married—no more than fun though their speak might be. If it wasn't for that snippet of a creature, Ellen, you'd think Simpson as fine a goodson as you'd meet, a bit slow at the uptake, maybe a bit dour, but a pretty, upstanding childe he was now.

Folk wondered a bit what she thought of those jaunts, Ellen Simpson down by her lone in Greenden. But she never said a word to a soul about them, not that she saw a many to speak to; she'd just smile, and go running and bring you some tea, kind enough you supposed that the creature was, but you'd never get yourself to like her, somehow; she'd set you at unease till you'd sit and wonder what ailed yourself—till going up home through the dark you'd be filled with fancies daft as a carrying woman, as though the trees moved and the broom was whispering, and some beast with quiet breath came padding in your tracks; and you'd look, and 'twas only a whin that you'd passed. And you'd heave a great breath, outside of the Den, up in the light of the evening sun, though the Den below was already in shadow.

But of nights as that summer wore on to its close she took to standing at her kitchen door while the light drew in and the dark came close: now and then some soul would come on her there, near startle her out of her skin as he cried *Ay, mistress, it's a fine bit night.* And she'd laugh, with her hand at her breast, daft-like, and then turn her head as though half she'd forgotten you, and look up and away out over the trees, and you'd look the same way and see feint the thing. And then maybe you'd look harder and see what it was; it was from the kitchen door alone of Greenden that the swathe of the trees and the broom was broken and through the hollow that was left in the gloaming the sun struck light on the Grampian slopes, long miles away and across the Mearns, shining immediate, yet distant and blue, their green earth-hazed in the heather-bells. And that was the thing that she stood and watched, as a daftie would, and you'd scrape your feet, and you'd

give a bit hoast, and she'd start and switch round, her face gone white, and say *Oh, I'm sorry, I'd forgotten you were here. Was it George that you wanted to see?*

Well, that was in June, and the June-end came, as bonny as ever it came in the Howe; folk meeting the Simpson man on the road would cry to him for a joke *Ay, man, you're fair smothered away from the world in Greenden.* And, faith! they spoke but the truth, so high was the broom with a mantling of bloom, and the trees a wall green-blinding the place. George Simpson made out of it every bit night over to the Mains' new barn they were building; he'd pretend it was the barn he went over to see, but he'd edge away from it as soon as he might, taik round to the kitchen, and Jeannie would blush: *Step away in, Mr. Simpson. How are you? I'm sure you are tired.*

Well, that barn it was, Webster was to swear, brought to an end that steer at Greenden. He never told the story in a neighbour-like way, he never did that, and he wasn't much liked, for he'd never much news to give a body when you spoke to him at the tail of his van and would drop a bit hint that you'd like to know why the Gordon quean was getting gey stout, and if Wallace was as coarse as they said to his wife, and such newsy-like bits of an interest to folk. He'd just grunt when you spoke and start counting the eggs, and say he was damned if he knew or he cared. So he told the Greenden tale to none but his wife; he thought her the same as himself, did Alec. But faith! she could claik a tink from a door, and soon it was known up and down the Howe, every bit of the happening that night at Greenden.

For he'd driven down late, as aye he had done, the grocer, and was coming in by the yard when he met Ellen Simpson come running up the road; her face was white in the fading light, and twice as she ran he saw her fall; and she picked herself up with blood on her face where a stone had cut as she fell. And Webster stopped his horse and jumped off the van and went running to meet her; and he cried *God, mistress, what's ta'en you—what's wrong?*

And she gabbled as he held her, he saw her eyes wild, syne she quieted a minute and covered her eyes and shivered, hot though the June night was. Then she whispered sudden, he shivered himself *They've done some-*

thing to my hill, they have taken it away! Oh, I can't stand it now, I can't, I can't!

And Webster said *What?* He was clean dumbfoundered; and he thought in a flash of old Grant of Greenden—he also had whispered and whispered like that. But she pointed up across the larch-hill and the broom, and he gowked, did the grocer, and saw nothing for a while. Syne he saw that there arose through that howe in the woods, through which you'd once see the light gleam on the hills, the roof and the girders of Murdoch's new barn. He stared at the thing, and then stared at the woman, and at that she broke down and cried like a bairn; she'd no shame before him, she was surely daft.

Oh, I can't stand it longer in this hateful place! It's smothering and killing me, down and lost here, I've been frightened, so frightened since the first hour here. I've tried not to show it, and I know that it's nothing, but the trees—they hate me, the fields, and at night . . . Oh, I can't stand it longer, not even for George, now they've blocked up that sight of the hill that was mine!

And she cried out more of that stite, and the grocer—he'd aye liked her—was fair in a way: *Whisht, mistress, go in and lie down,* he said, but she whispered: *Don't leave me, don't leave me, I'm frightened!* And the dark came then down over the broom, and the horse stood champing and scraping its hooves, and a howlet began to hoot in the larch while Webster sat by her in the kitchen to quiet her. And she whispered once: *George—he's safe now, he's safe, God died, but I needn't, He saved him, not I.* And syne she was whispering again in her terror: *The trees and the broom, keep off the trees; it's growing so dark I can't see it, the hill. . . .*

But at last she grew quiet; he told her to lie down. She went ben from the kitchen and he stood and thought. And he minded her man might be at the Mains; he went out and drew round his grocer's van, and got into it and drove up out of the Den, and whipped his bit beast to a trot for the Mains.

And folk told when he got there he went stamping in the kitchen: George Simpson was sitting with Jeannie and her father; the mistress was off to the pictures at Bervie. And Alec Webster cried *Leave your courting until you're a widower; have you no shame at all to abandon your wife*

night after night in that hell of a Den? And George Simpson stood up and blustered *You Bulgar——,* and the grocer said *Away, raise your hand up to me, you big, well-fed bullock, and I'll crack your jaw where you stand.* Old Murdoch came in between them then, and he cried *What is't? What's wrong?*

So Webster told Simpson his wife was gey queer; was he or was he not going home? And Simpson scowled and said *Yes,* and went out with the grocer, and that childe swung round his weary bit horse and lashed it to a trot, and out into the road, and so, in their time, by the track to the Den. And there it was dark as a fireless lum, but far off as they neared to the biggings they heard a voice singing —singing so strange that it raised their hair:

There is a green hill far away,
Beyond a city wall,
Where the dear Lord was crucified,
Who died to save us all.

And it suddenly ceased, and Webster swore, and he lashed the horse, and they came to the close, and Webster jumped down and ran into the house. Behind him went Simpson, more slow—he was feared. In the kitchen it was dark and still as they came. Then the grocer slipped, there was something slippery and wet on the floor. So he kindled a match, and they both looked up, and they saw what it was, and it turned them sick. And a waft of wind came in from the door and the Shape from the beam swung to and fro.

And Webster turned round and went blundering out, as though he couldn't see, and he called to Simpson: *Take her down and I'll go for the doctor, man.*

But he knew right well that that would help nothing, and the thought went with him as he drove through the woods, up out of the Den, to the road that walked by the sea and the green hills that stood to peer with quiet faces in the blow of the wind from the sunset's place.

§ 3. SKETCH — HUGH MACDIARMID

EDINBURGH

I DO not know that even in my most savage moods I could ever have been tempted to reduce the time-honoured

fantasy of Edinburgh in the way that Charles Graves does when he exclaims: "It was at this stage that I pointed out Edinburgh's greatest charm of all. Not Princes Street, nor the Royal Mile, nor the Braid Hills, nor the Lion, nor Arthur's Seat, nor Torphichen, nor the Italian head-waiters, nor Holyrood. It was the total absence of beggars and litter throughout the proud, beautiful, courteous and historic city." The stage when one wishes to point out Edinburgh's greatest charm of all, sure that it has one, and that it lies in none of the famous things, is a stage I reach about twice every minute when I am in Edinburgh; but I have not succeeded in doing so yet nor do I know of anyone else who has. I feel that Mr. Graves's attributions would have been wrong even if there had been the absence of beggars and litter of which he speaks. Alas, there is no absence of either. I am not sure that my old friend Jimmy Buchanan, who was mightily concerned with the former if not with the latter would not feel that there had been a great increase of both in the last few years. (Jimmy, under whom I learned the gentle art of "tub-thumping" and first graduated as a speaker at the Mound, was a scavenger and one of the pioneers of Scottish Socialism.)

Failing such a descent from "the sublime to the ridiculous", however, I have often wished that I could meet someone, preferably a highly intelligent person, who, from some inconceivable cause (since it is difficult to imagine anyone, any highly intelligent person at all events, in the world who has not however vaguely the traditional conception of "mine own romantic town" "the grey metropolis of the North", even if only some notion of its outline resembling the saw-backed graph on a fever-chart) had never heard of Edinburgh, and go round it with him, or her, on the understanding that I too had never been in it before and was just as incapable of imagining what on earth the Castle might be or what the queer pile of Holyrood-house at the end of a loathsome slum could portend. To go round with and listen to the observations of such a person and eventually arrive with him or her at some conception of the whole phenomenon—or, more likely, fail to do so—would compensate me for the hopeless preconceptions which vitiate almost all impressions of it; all the guide-book chatter, all the "intellectual rabbit's food" of historical tittle-tattle and miscellaneous facts.

It is nearly as rare to find anyone who has approached it from the usual angles, and, later, effectively got rid of all the nonsense. Two such I have known recently—one an Englishman, one a Frenchman, both scholars of international reputation; and both of them dismissed the whole thing with a shrug, and comical expressions of despair at the impossibility of meeting anyone in it who was really alive. They had no use for the famous sights and the hackneyed tributes. With the Englishman I agreed that full of professors and divines and artists and lawyers and learned and leisured persons generally as Edinburgh is, it does not include a single person (with the possible exception of Professor Crew in relation to genetics) who was in even the smallest measure vital, a creative worker, a "free spirit" in Goethe's phrase, to his or her science or art—any more than one could find in the whole of Scotland, if one was inclined to revolutionary methods (which God forbid!), a single person worth killing in the sense of being a person in a key position and really responsible for the ill governance of our country. This absence of real and responsible personality gives a feeling as of trying to fight malaria with a bayonet. Criticism has no effective target. It is said that one cannot indict a whole nation; in Scotland the trouble is that one cannot do anything else—except perhaps, call the offending nation England instead of Scotland itself. In any case even thinking on these matters is like trying to get at grips with Ibsen's great Boyg; a similar vague diffused spirit of evil, emasculating the whole life of the nation and rendering any creative effort, any real spiritual activity, impossible, has the whole of Scotland in its toils, and Edinburgh is its headquarters. "The good is the enemy of the best"; here we have a city of great traditions, a famous academic centre, a highly educated community in which any genuine intellectual life is out of the question. It has been said (in a typical Edinburgh sentence—especially the final adjective) that in the world-famous Edinburgh School of Medicine, "if one excepts a few discoveries such as that of 'fixed air' by Black, of the diverse functions of the nerve-roots by Bell, of the anæsthetic properties of chloroform by Simpson, of the properties of certain powerful drugs by Christison, and of the importance of antiseptic procedures by Lister, the influence of Edinburgh medicine has been of a steady con-

structive rather than of a revolutionary type." It could not be more mildly put. The same thing is true in every other connection. Edinburgh lives on manifestations of the creative spirit made elsewhere and it is not regarded as a serious matter—it is not even realized—that it does not in turn initiate anything—hardly anything at all, let alone anything of prime consequence—in relation to any of the subjects upon which it nevertheless battens so disproportionately. It is this essential dependence—this failure to give in like kind no matter in how small a measure in return for all it receives—that accounts for the general demoralization of Edinburgh. Even what it has done, such as the few scientific discoveries listed above—are not known to the vast majority of its citizens, or of the Scottish (or any other) people, and have no effective place in the "legend" of Edinburgh. Neither has anything else which is of real consequence. At the banquet of the Faculty of Advocates in commemoration of the centenary of the death of Sir Walter Scott, the then Lord Advocate (Mr. Craigie Aitchinson) conjured up the shades of those who had once frequented Parliament Hall—from John Ross of Montgrennan (in the 15th century), Sir Adam Otterburn, Gavin Dunbar, Alexander Myln, Johnson of Warriston, Sir George Mackenzie ("the bloody Mackenzie"), Viscount Stair ("the most commanding figure in the law of Scotland"), Forbes of Culloden, Lord Kames (who sat on the Bench until he was nearly 90—a precedent beloved of Judges—and who, in his farewell speech, called his brother Judges "auld bitches"—a precedent beloved of the Bar), Cockburn, Jeffrey, Cranstoun, Horner, Inglis, Young, Balfour, Asher, Ardwall—what a tale! What a roll of hosts! What a "legend emptied of concern!" But a little later my old friend, Willie Stewart, that veteran Socialist propagandist, was writing, and I agree with him, "To my mind—though there will be dissentients—the most outstanding, the most memorable, and the most significant event in recent times North of the Tweed was the invasion of Edinburgh by the Hunger Marchers, all the more significant because of the fact that it was frowned upon by Official Labour. It was my misfortune that I could not be in Parliament Square when the Hunger Marchers bivouacked in that historic rendezvous. Like the elusive Godfrey Collins (the Secretary of State for Scotland) I had

pressing business elsewhere. The leaders of the march were doubtless too busy to think of going inside Parliament House, where the lawyers most do congregate, and where they could have made obeisance before the portraits of the eminent Scots Judges who sent Thomas Muir to Botany Bay and Baird and Hardie and Wilson to the scaffold. Generations have come and gone since these kindly old gentlemen worked their will upon the rebels. And this is where we have got to. Fifteen and threepence a week and the Hunger Marchers in Parliament Square. After a century and a half of gradualism in a hurry. But of course in these days, Scotland was ruled by a dictatorship. The dictatorship of Castlereagh and Co., with Dundas as the ruthless instrument in Scotland, and with press-gangs, Bow Street runners, and paid spies everywhere. Hitlerism is not a new thing, nor is Germany its Fatherland. And now this thing called progress has come back full circle. From dictatorship to dictatorship." Scotland has a genius for "domesticating its issues", however, and no hint of these crude realities elbowed its way into the banquet in Parliament Hall. It is pleasant to read that "the dinner finished with a warm hope for the prosperity of the Bar after the present dull time shall have passed—just the note that Sir Walter would have struck for the encouragement of all young advocates. And the Dean was sitting in the very chair in which 'sic sedebat'!" There's Edinburgh for you!

With the Frenchman I had no difficulty in agreeing that Edinburgh's position resembles what H. A. L. Fisher says of Paul Valèry: "The ordinary biography affords no indication of what a man is like. It records his ancestry, the outer facts of his education and activities, not the deeper part of him, the inner functioning of the intellect, the mode in which and the passages by which ideas flowed into his mind and stirred his will. This, which is the true index of the human character, is omitted. Valèry, on the other hand, only cares for this essential and inner kernel of history, 'the functioning of beings and the generation of works'." Edinburgh does not care for it and only possesses it to an infinitesimal degree. The husk is everything; there is no kernel. This could not have been better exemplified than by the fact that when the Corporation of Edinburgh organized the Scott Centenary celebration in

1932 (in a city whose University has no chair of Scottish Literature) it contrived to forget that Scotland has authors even now alive—more *alive*, in fact, than they have been for a century or two and busy creating a national renaissance movement—and the only writing man to march with the bailies and the Leith Dock Commissioners was the English novelist, Mr. Hugh Walpole.

Writing of David Hume's reception in France, Professor H. J. C. Grierson says: "The English, accustomed, as Sir George Trevelyan pointed out, to see poets and writers kept in their proper places, found it incomprehensible; the Scots not so much, for among them even the common people have been known to show as much respect for a minister, a doctor, or even a professor, as for a lord." These were the good old days; the "common people" have little respect nowadays for ministers, doctors, professors or lords; but the better-off citizenry of Edinburgh still respect professional men almost as much as big business men; poets and writers however are another matter. It is not even a question of keeping them in their proper places; they have no place.

In thinking of Edinburgh—though every now and again the sheer physical appeal of the place still "gets at me"—I have no use for the Castle, Holyroodhouse, and the other edifices of old Edinburgh, for the drivelling imbecilities of antiquarianism generally, or for its place as the theatre of such doings as the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, or—scarcely at all—for its University under the Principalship of an English mineralogist whose only claims to distinction seem to be that he was formerly President of the Indian Munitions Board and that in his address to the British Association at Johannesburg in 1919 he held that if a nation is denied by the rest of the world certain essential minerals that nation becomes incapable of sustained war, a thesis not without its significance in view of the fact that 90 per cent of the world's supplies of nickel come from Canada and that although wolfram, from which tungsten is derived, is more widely distributed, much of it comes from Burma, Malaya, and Australasia. These distinctions of Sir Thomas Holland's recall the peculiar services generally of our Scottish Universities (of which Edinburgh's is, of course, the youngest); and whenever I despair of Scottish culture I like in particular to remember

the confessions of Sir James Irvine, the Principal of St. Andrews University, in which he tells how: "For years he had turned his attention specially to the scientific study of sugars. He might say just in passing that there was more than one sugar. There were hundreds of sugars, most of them very rare and inaccessible. The principal scientific interest resided in those rarer forms of sugar. He had turned his attention to these purely as a scientific study. In the early summer of 1914 he took up the study of one particular substance of that type of material called dulcitol. He regarded it merely as a scientific interest. He had no idea that a world war was on the point of bursting on their heads or even had he known that would he have had any idea whatsoever that this innocent crystalline sugar would play an all-important part in the preparation of that war. But such was the case. . . . In the end there was nothing for it but to procure the material synthetically. . . . At first it was made regardless of cost. Very soon they were making it at the rate of about half a pound a week and then two pounds a week, and the amount grew because by this time France was clamouring for it, and Russia also, and in the end Italy had to get it as well. They prepared the whole of that material required by all of the allied armies in sheds built on the lawns at St. Andrews . . . more cheaply in the end than they used to get it from Germany."

That takes some beating; but Edinburgh did not too badly—its previous Principal, Sir Alfred Ewing, performed miracles in the deciphering of enemy code-messages and, later on, there was the yeomen service the students rendered as special constables and voluntary workers at the time of the General Strike. Sir Frederick Hopkins, this year's President of the British Association, had to administer in his address from the Chair a direct reply to the utterances made last year by Sir Alfred, from whose pessimistic speech one would have gathered that the present financial system was unalterable and the elimination of human drudgery by scientific labour saving and production-increasing devices a grave problem menacing civilization instead of an unqualified blessing rendering civilized life possible for everybody for the first time in human history. "Most of us," said Sir Frederick Hopkins, "have had a tendency in the past to fear the gift of leisure to the

majority. To believe that it may be a great social benefit requires some mental adjustment, and a belief in the educability of the average man or woman. But if the political aspirations of the nations should grow sane, and the artificial economic problems of the world be solved, the combined and assured gifts of health, plenty, and leisure may prove to be the final justification of applied science." It is to no such end that the activities of Sir Alfred Ewing, Sir Thomas Holland, Sir James Irvine and the scientific staffs of the Scottish universities are directed; they are all contented to remain in the state of innocence Sir James Irvine alleges he had to the emergence of the War and the significance of dulcitol—but an increasing proportion of the students are alarmed at the likelihood that they are qualifying for non-existent jobs and a smaller percentage of them are realizing that science will go on and eliminate a very large amount of employment and necessitate the reorientation of education on a purely cultural basis. None of the Scottish Universities seem to have the faintest glimmering of the need or desirability of anything of the sort, however, and, as a writer in *The Listener* recently put it: "One would not wish to judge between the culture of science and the culture of humane letters, but it is clear enough that if a young Scotsman wished to steep himself in the latter it is to England he must go."

There is little in Edinburgh to offset this general myopia and wrong-headedness. I am pleased to recall Chopin's adventures there; I have always had a particular interest in the fact that the disreputable French slang poet, Jean Rictus, lived in Edinburgh for a while; I am glad that one of the earliest translators of Nietzsche into English, Thomas Common (of whom little or nothing seems to be known) was an Edinburgh man. Apart from a few facts like these, I have to fall back upon one or two engaging eccentricities of learned persons, and a relish for stories like that associated with the discovery of chloroform.

I like to remember, for example, that P. G. Tait, in the midst of the theory of brachistochromes, the phenomenon of mirage, the theory of knots, and the foundations of the kinetic theory of gases, which engaged his mathematical powers, contrived to make that discovery of the fundamental importance of "underspin" in determining the length of drive of a golf-ball and the accuracy of approach

with well-played iron shots which threw a new light on the whole process of play and taught the intelligent player how to improve his game. But I am afraid the innumerable golfers indebted to him have no knowledge of their benefactor, let alone any realization that so typical an Edinburgh contribution to the amenities of life was the by-product of a preoccupation with such matters as the linear *vector function* ϕ and the differential operator ∇, which contains in its quaternion essence the special operators. Grad, Div and Curl.

With regard to the chloroform—then known as "perchloride of formyle"—discovery, we read that "Simpson was not favourably disposed at first towards the drug, as it struck him as being not sufficiently volatile, and the sample was laid aside. It was the custom of Simpson and his assistants to meet in the evenings, pour various suggested anæsthetics into tumblers, and inhale them in order to find out results. One evening they had been as usual trying various experiments, and then, remembering the sample of perchloride of formyle, they searched for it, found it under a heap of waste paper, charged their tumblers and began to inhale. What happened is thus told by Simpson's daughter: "A moment more then all was quiet, and then a crash. On awakening Mr. Simpson's first perception was mental. 'This is far stronger and better than ether,' said he to himself. His second was to note that he was prostrate on the floor, and that among the friends about him there was both confusion and alarm. Of his assistants Dr. Duncan he saw snoring heavily, and Dr. Keith kicking violently at the table above him. They made several more trials of it that eventful evening, and were so satisfied with the results that the festivities of the evening did not terminate till a late hour, 3 a.m."

Simpson's career—and the material results of it—were typical of an Edinburgh that has passed away and the like of which will never return. Born in 1811 at Bathgate, he was the last comer in a family of eight of whom six were living. The family was housed in a four-roomed cottage and the total resources amounted to eight shillings and threepence. The mother was of exceptional ability, the father of lesser account. At the age of 14 Jamie went to Edinburgh, "very, very young, very solitary, very poor, and almost friendless." He won a bursary of £10 a year,

shared a room with two friends at three shillings a week, obtained the L.R.C.S. at the age of nineteen, and took his M.D. at twenty-one, finding time meanwhile to hunt for flint arrowheads and sepulchral urns. At twenty-nine he was elected Professor of Midwifery in the University of Edinburgh, and was on the way to becoming Sir James Y. Simpson, Bt., whose patients were said to have put £80,000 a year into the hands of the proprietors of the Edinburgh hotels.

It is interesting to recall, in view of England's general attitude and practice in regard to Scotland, that Edinburgh has not gone unenvied of what little distinction it has as the seat of a great Medical School, and, in 1902 in a leader commenting on Cecil Rhodes's will, *The Lancet* found it necessary to observe: "With regard to the relative educational facilities for medical students at Oxford and at Edinburgh, Mr. Rhodes makes a suggestion the meaning of which is obvious though the testator had not the facts of medical education very clearly before him. He suggests that Oxford should 'try and extend its scope so as if possible to make its medical school at least as good as that at the University of Edinburgh.' Mr. Rhodes in his will shows intimate and modern knowledge of the conditions existing at his college and his university. When the will was made he no doubt knew that there had been progress and improvement initiated in the matter of medical education at Oxford, so that the early training of the Oxford medical student in the purely scientific or auxiliary branches of his profession is thoroughly first-class. He also knew that as a centre of medical education Edinburgh deservedly enjoys a long-established and world-wide fame. When however, he recommends the University of Oxford to extend its scope and implies that it has, or could obtain, the power to make its medical school 'at least as good' as that of Edinburgh, he would appear to have overlooked the circumstances which contribute to make medical education at Edinburgh University what it is, circumstances which are quite unattainable at Oxford whatever efforts the University may be stimulated to make. Edinburgh as the capital city of Scotland, and one of its largest centres of population, is a medical centre in the natural course of affairs, such as Oxford can never become. Edinburgh in its world-famous Royal Infirmary combines in one institution to a

singular degree all that is necessary for the most complete course of clinical study. The University of Oxford can do what lies in its power as a university for the education of its medical students, but it cannot possibly increase the Radcliffe Infirmary so as to make it a hospital comparable with the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh. Nor can the reputation for scientific teaching which is necessary to attract students from all parts of the world be built up in a day. Edinburgh was a centre of scientific inquiry and teaching when Oxford and Cambridge were schools of academic learning that practically confined their attention to Latin, Greek, mathematics, theology, and to questions arising out of these studies. Cambridge has made a name for itself during the past twenty years as a school *par excellence* for the students of natural philosophy, and there is no reason why the University of Oxford should not expand in a similar direction and with similar success. But neither of the old universities can become a centre of medical knowledge; both, in the absence of large and varied clinical material, must be content with supplying exceptionally well-grounded students to other medical schools and with rigorously examining these same students in the later stages of their careers."

If Edinburgh has not given the creative spirit due place, the creative spirit has not been deluded as to Edinburgh's false position. It is a significant fact that with all the romance attached to it it has never been made the subject of any good, let alone any great, poem. It could not have failed to inspire the poets if there had not all along been something wrong with its pretensions—some essential falsity the instincts of their genius could never be deluded by. Even in prose—except for guide-book stuff and gossipy historical matter—it makes a poor showing; an anthology of excerpts with the slightest pretensions to rank as literature would be an exceedingly slim volume indeed, and its principal contributors would almost all be foreigners. Of living writers on Edinburgh the best is perhaps G. K. Chesterton (who, of course, is half-a-Scot), and the next, Rebecca West (who is not Scottish but was born and brought up in Edinburgh). The accepted convention has not squared with the creative imagination. Excellent in passages as Rebecca West's Edinburgh novel *The Judge,* undoubtedly is, the book is a poor affair to the Scottish counterpart of

Ulysses. which Edinburgh might well prompt. G. W. Stonier has said that Victorian England had "none of that volcanic impulse which was breaking out in other parts of Europe, no 'mad genius' comparable with Strindberg, Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, or Van Gogh . . . We missed a vital step in the development of literature." Scotland, Edinburgh, has been missing all the vital steps for centuries; it remains infinitely worse off than Victorian England in the respect referred to. One of the few Scottish writers who has addressed himself to the problem was Alexander Smith, of whom a recent critic wrote as follows: "Smith's sensitiveness is shown, above all, in his reaction to the two great cities he knew well—the modern industrial city of Glasgow and the ancient capital city of Edinburgh. In each he found a glory and in each a horror. The finest of all his poems is that which bears the name of Glasgow. He sees it as a terror, yet as he gazes it changes to a dream. The terror comes first; it is the awful sense of evil which had darkened his boyish spirit among the slums of east end. Yet he contrives to find the glory in close associations with this horror. Industrialism has made the slums; industrialism also pours out the smoke which the setting sun turns into beauty—the wreaths of bronze and the dusky fire are industrial; the splendour quivering on the spire is of a purer sort. In Edinburgh he had a subject of a different kind; a subject whose grandeur and glory impose themselves on the spectator from the first. Smith's treatment is to be found not in the poems entitled 'Edinburgh', which he did not live to revise and which is far from equal to 'Glasgow', but rather in the masterly chapter which introduces 'A Summer in Skye'. He pays a whole-hearted tribute to the unsurpassed beauty of the city, and he puts in words an aspect seldom noticed, the magic loveliness of the scene by night—the lights dotted across the chasm of Princess Street Gardens, climbing the Mount and losing themselves in the dim heights of the Old Town. But Smith finds in Edinburgh the same contrast as in Glasgow, though *in reversed order—first the dream, then the terror.* He knows well that behind the great Castle ridge lie in the Cowgate slums as awful as these of Glasgow. Both those slums set their stamp on the faces of those who live in them. 'It is amazing', he writes with reference to the Cowgate, 'of what ugliness the human face is capable.' How deep

the horror of slumdom has penetrated his soul is shown most strikingly after he reaches Skye. He is told of the abominations of the Skye hovels, and is expected to be horrified. He sees them for himself, He describes a Skye hut, but nothing extenuating. There are three generations of human beings crowded into one end of it, where the peat-reek eddies about always, refusing to make its exit through the bottomless herring barrel that served for chimney. In the other end are the animals. But Smith firmly refuses to be horrified. There are compensations. Step outside the hut, and in a moment you are in the presence of Nature—green turf, purple heather, the pure stream, the ocean, the unpolluted sky. The people are strong, happy, long-lived. *This* is not horrible. For horror we are carried back again to the Cowgate, where there may be seen 'faces of men containing the *débris* of the entire decalogue, faces which hurt you more than a blow would'. And yet beauty lies almost as close to those faces of the Cowgate as it does to the inmates of Skye hovel." The attitude is, of course, inadequate; but it is on a different level, coming from Smith at the time he wrote, than that described by Desmond MacCarthy in his essay on Balfour, where, describing a debate in the House of Commons upon a Housing Bill intended to remedy overcrowding, he says Balfour "pointed out that the Scottish crofters brought up large healthy families, a happy result which could not be due to diet or houseroom, for their children lived on porridge and in two-roomed cottages. What made them healthier and stronger than town-children. Why, good air and an active country life! No Housing Bill could provide those conditions: ergo the proposed changes were of little importance."

The only appropriate comment on this was made by the young English poet, Stephen Spender "Mr. MacCarthy quotes this story" he said "as an example of his hero's 'sophistry'. He is far too cultivated to see that it is in very bad taste. The story is an example of the obscene silliness of a certain type of don whom Mr. MacCarthy is only too willing to admire." It is a type of obscene silliness in which not only Edinburgh University but the better off classes in the city; and in Scotland, generally can vie with any English don. The fact of the matter is simply that Edinburgh is the city "with a lie in its right hand"; a

capital that is not one; a magnificent provision for an unfulfilled function. Or, as a young Scottish writer put it the other day: "Edinburgh, this Edinburgh of our time, is a Capital City with a provincial population; a Scottish city whose people strive to be English and succeed in being nothing in particular."

"Such," he continued, "is the inhospitable clime from which young men of promise flee to London and to Paris, those genuine capitals where it is possible to be superior without being so terribly in earnest about it. A truly Scottish atmosphere, which might form the basis of a truly Scottish work of art, is to be found in Edinburgh only amongst quite low and vulgar and humble people whose acquaintance one must cultivate surreptitiously, or lose the favour of the approved Edinburgh society. The common people have preserved the precious seed of native culture before now, when their foolish betters sought after exotic things of less value. It is to be hoped that literary history will repeat itself here in Edinburgh."

I agree with most of that, except that I have no faith in these young men who flee to London or Paris. If anything of consequence to Scottish literature is to be done it will be done by young writers living in Scotland and "transcending their environment by exact analysis"; and if one is to live in Scotland it is necessary to live in Edinburgh. There is no place else.

§ 4. Study — Lewis Grassic Gibbon

Representative Scots (1) The Wrecker

JAMES RAMSAY MACDONALD

Language, that "perfected crying of apes and dogs" at which Anatole France professed a whimsical astonishment in its ability to debate the profundities of metaphysics, has never been merely a technique of expression for Mr. MacDonald. Very early he was snared in the ancient debate between Nominalist and Realist and very early (albeit unconscious of the fact) took sides in that ancient argument. He has never succeeded in penetrating behind words to thought: there is, indeed, no evidence that he ever attempted this awesome feat. Even in elementary

manipulation of English one is conscious of a curious phenomenon: he is a clever, if rather unintelligent child, engaged in lifting sentences piecemeal from some super-abacus frame and arranging them in a genteel pattern. He is not engaged in displaying either James Ramsay MacDonald or his reactions of awe or hate or wonder or love towards that bright glimmer between the shades of sleep that we call the universe. He is merely engaged in genuflection at the shrine of Words:

"Away to the north, across the Firth, rose the pale blue hills of Sutherland and Ross: to the south lay the fertile farms of Morayshire sloping up through green wood and purple moorland into the blue tops of the Grampians, with the ruined Palace of Spynie in the mid-distance; to the east sweep the sea, bordered by a wide stretch of yellow sand bending away into the horizon, with hills in the background, the whole stretching out in peaceful beauty which has won for it the name of the 'Bay of Naples'. . . ."

Note both the cleverness and the rigid adjectival conventionality: pale blue hills and fertile farms and peaceful beauty. It is the kind of thing that the dux in a little Scots school pens while the Dominie beams upon him (I know, having been such a dux myself, companioned by such a Dominie). It is pre-adolescent, it tells one nothing about either Mr. MacDonald's countryside or about his feelings towards it. It is the kind of guide-book chatter which raises your ire against an unknown (and probably inoffensive) landscape.

So with that philosophy of Socialism which Mr. MacDonald was wont to exfoliate in the days before, glancing downwards and backwards, he caught sight of the seemly shape his calves occupied inside the silk stockings of Court dress. Perhaps this Socialism had once a logic, as certainly it had once a fine, if anæmic, sincerity, a passionate pity if also an unimpassioned patience. In the mazes of Mr. MacDonald's vocabulary it behaves like a calf in an amateurish slaughter-shed, dodging with frightened moos the impact of innumerable padded bludgeons:

"Biologically 'the negation of the existing state of things,' its 'inevitable breaking up,' its 'momentary existence' is impossible. Here we find, as we find everywhere in the Marxian method, a lack of real guarantee (although there are many verbal guarantees) that change is progress. The

biological view emphasizes the possibilities of existing society as the mother of future societies, and regards idea and circumstance as the pair from which the new societies are to spring. It gives not only an explanation of the existing state of things, but of its giving birth to a future state of things. It also views every form of existence on its actual process of movement and therefore on its perishing —very different from perishable—side. It lays the very slightest emphasis on its 'critical and revolutionary side', because it is mainly constructive and the idea of 'clearing before building' is alien to its nature."

This is a waste of wind and water, a seeping marshland under a fog. Note the power of the word "biological" in the mind of Mr. MacDonald. It means one of a dozen things, and means none of them for long. Firstly, it is pure Darwinism in operation. Then it is Weismannism. Then (for all we know to the contrary) it is the epitome of the benign convolutings of Tantric Buddhism. We catch a faint glimpse through yellow fogs of verbosity of an idea that the great lizards of the Mezozoic suffered no deep or terrible calamity with the coming of the ice-caps. Did the stegosaurus freeze in his swamps and pass from the world for ever? Not at all. The stegosaurus looked about him and said: "The cold comes on apace. I must discard my scales and grow me some hair." And this the good stegosaurus did, mislaying scales, claws, reptilian intestines and reptilian nature, and was presently a mammoth.

This—if ever he has possessed a view, not merely a vocabulary—is Mr. MacDonald's view of the processes of biological evolution. *Cassell's Popular Educator,* he tells with pride, was "his only university." We may well believe the truth of this statement. That the great lords of the Mezozoic age did indeed die away completely and catastrophically, leaving to rise to greatness in the alien mammalian world their lesser and harried kin, not their own direct evolving descendants, is an elementary scrap of knowledge in which the good Cassell had perhaps no space to specialize. Yet lack of that knowledge has conditioned the being of what purports to be a "scientific Socialism"—the creed which was presently foisted upon the British Labour Party, the creed which presently wrecked that party completely and disastrously.

In ascribing to Mr. MacDonald responsibility for bringing about (soulfully, with a radio-wide slurring of consonants) that wreckage, one is, of course, personifying many tendencies and many obscure gospels in the movement itself. Yet this hazy inability to grasp at the flinty actualities of existence, personal or universal, is in so many ways characteristically Scots that to Mr. MacDonald more than to any other may be ascribed the major share in this notable achievement. He is as representationally Scots in his approach to politics as the late Sir James Arthur Thomson was in his approach to biology, as Sir Arthur Keith is in his approach to ethnology. They are as three investigators commissioned to three minute and elaborate experiments in the weighing and sifting of chemical constituents: and they approach their tasks uniquely clad in boxing-gloves and blinkers.

In the case of Mr. MacDonald, at least, it is both farcical and tragic to note how much his inability to penetrate below words is caused by the fact that the shape and setting of the words are racially unfamiliar to him. English remains for him a foreign language: its terms and expressions, its unique twists of technique, he has followed and charted laboriously, competently, and unintelligently. Yet, mazed in these pursuits, he has never learned to think like an Englishman, he has never comprehended what Englishmen thought, he has never comprehended essential meanings in English vocabularies or English minds. As a result, he has foisted antique Scotticisms upon quite alien essentials, misapprehended the meaning, origin and intention of a great social movement, and (in ultimate prideful pose) stood aside to watch that movement murdered. . . .

He is supposed to have Norse blood in his veins. It is extremely likely. One of his biographers, a babbling lady greatly given to clothing her expressions in the raggedest of verbal reach-me-downs, tells us that "his homeland is Morayshire, and Morayshire, north and east of the Grampians, breeds a race in which mingle the blood of the Highlanders and that of the Norse rovers from across the sea." His grandmother, by whom he was brought up, "had seen better days, and, even in the poorest circumstances, retained the demeanour of a gentlewoman, a natural grace and dignity of manner." Oh God, oh Lossiemouth! "There he made the acquaintance of some

of the remarkable men of the country through Samuel Smiles' 'Life of a Scottish Naturalist,' Thomas Edwards of Banff, 'Thomas Dick, the Thurso Baker'—geologist. Above all, Hugh Miller influenced him then. Hugh Miller's 'Schools and Schoolmasters' was among the first books he bought. The watchmaker also lent him Scott and Dickens."

He appears to have flourished greatly in the sipping of this pale scum from the surface of English letters. Young, handsome, genteel, he set out for London.

London for a while was unkind. It employed him as an invoice clerk in a City warehouse at a salary of 12/6 a week. We are assured that this was the foundation of his Socialism and that he never forgot those terrible days. The 1931 cuts in the pay of junior civil servants—cuts in many a case reducing purchasing power to a lower level than 12/6 a week—were authorized during a period of temporary amnesia.

It was 1888. Presently he became secretary to a Liberal Parliamentary candidate; presently he had joined the Social Democratic Federation. But the Federation had never heard of Samuel Smiles or the dignity of labour or the necessity (they stared, astounded Cockneys) for "independent *thote*." Soon their soullessness had vexed the young Mr. MacDonald from the ranks. He joined the Fabians, and, about the same time, obtained a footing in journalism.

Meanwhile, Labour representation in the Liberal Party was moulting forth its discontents. Keir Hardie had arisen as the apostle of Independent Labour. The young MacDonald watched this development carefully. At the Bradford Conference of 1893 Keir Hardie was instrumental in founding the Independent Labour Party. A cautious year afterwards Mr. MacDonald adhered to the new party.

It was the strangest of parties. Disgruntled Liberal intellectuals with Parliamentary leanings supported it; intelligent workmen supported it; sentimental anarchists supported it. It had all kinds of philosophies, all kinds of codes of action. Round the problems of the class war it revolved like a monkey in a cage, distrustful of the tail-nipping propensities of the central axle. In the election of 1895 it put forward twenty-eight candidates. Young

Ramsay MacDonald stood for Southampton and was rejected with great unanimity, despite a voice already highly trained in the enunciation, terrifyingly, of those platitudinous nebulosities before which the simple Keir Hardie bowed his head, acknowledging MacDonald Labour's "greatest intellectual asset."

For a moment we may let temptation have its way, and turn to the lady biographer for a gem-cut paragraph. She is describing MacDonald of the Southampton election:

"If he appeared a knight in armour, he was hardly, for all his charm and intermittent humour, the glow of his vitality, the Merciful Knight. But at the right hour he met the right woman. A hand was laid upon him that softened the rigidity, mellowed and sweetened the vital strength."

Predestined the hero of a novelette, Providence had not bungled in her choice. He travelled; he wrote disapprovingly of the unstatesmanlike Boer War; and he had a week-end cottage at Chesham Bois. He was shedding the rougher cut lines of his Scottishness, though the unique accent remained undiluted. Cultured, curving of moustache, he looks out from the photographs of those days. The conviction of continuity of culture became fixed in his mind—the mind which could lump "Cromwell, Wilton, Hampden, Penn, Burke" as "the best in the life of England"!

In 1900 the Labour Representation Committee came into being—the embryo Labour Party which returned two men to Parliament in the General Election of that year. MacDonald was elected secretary of the new organization, and worked with a fine assiduity in building it up. In the next election—that of 1906—he had his reward in two fashions—he himself was returned to Parliament by Leicester and twenty-eight other members of the Labour Party were returned as well. Mr. MacDonald became a skilled and outstanding Parliamentarian; more important, he became the chief theoretician of the Labour Party—of that group of men which claimed, and with some justice, to represent the true commons of Great Britain, the lowly, the oppressed, the Cheated of the Sunlight, the bitter relicts of the savagery of the Industrial Revolution. He organized publishing ventures, issues of series of Socialist

books and tracts; he engaged and won the attention of a vast audience beyond his immediate ken.

Three quotations from his published works:

"Socialism is no class movement. Socialism is a movement of opinion, not an organization of status. It is not the rule of the working class; it is the organization of the community."

Surely it was very plain. The stegosaurus was on the move, shedding its vertebrate spikes, abandoning its carnivorous diet, and realizing, appalled, that hitherto its constituent cells had been quite unorganized.

"History is a progression of social stages which have preceded and succeeded each other like the unfolding of life from the amœba to the mammal, or from the bud to the fruit. To-day we are in the economic stage. Yesterday we were in the political stage. To-morrow we shall be in the moral stage."

It was all so plain. Peace to the Abbé Mendel and his discoveries of violent revolution, from stage to stage, within the sleek skin of evolution. To-day was the economic stage: our fathers lived quite without economic organization, subsisting on sea-kale and mushrooms. Despite this, they engaged in politics—an abandoned pursuit we have quite outgrown. To-morrow our children will inherit the moral stage—both we and our fathers being entirely without morals. . . . And the day after to-morrow the world would enter on a millennial dotage.

"Intelligence and morality indicate the goal by which the struggle to escape the existing purgatory is guided. Human evolution is a stretching out, not a being pushed forward."

The much-tried stegosaurus, properly coaxed, would set about elongating its spine. . . .

To describe the opinions in such quotations as subhuman maunderings may be natural: it is also profoundly unjust. The Lossiemouth dux was writing good essays: he could, it seems, have written them almost in his sleep, and then stood by with a solemn smirk on his face while the Dominie read them. The Dominie was the British Labour Movement; and it put down each essay and gazed at the writer with a fresh upstirring from the wells of awe . . .

Nevertheless, he was no more than epitome of the move-

ment itself. From 1906 until 1914 there were strikes and disputes and wage-cuts: there were folk who starved to death, folk who lived mean and desperate lives, phthisitic children who gasped out their last breaths in the slums of the Duke of Westminster—but the great trade unions were powerful and comparatively rich. Conditions pressed not too bitterly on the great mass of labouring men and women. There was no direct and brutal tyranny, and this philosophy of slow and gradual and easy change, when no blood would be shed and little exertion would be required and the repentant lion would turn to a lamb, suited admirably the temper of the padded times. In Germany, the other country with a great and well-organized labour movement, Marxism, though not definitely repudiated, was watered down to innocuousness, the Day of Change remotely postponed to the era of Germany's grandchildren—those children who have now inherited Hitler.

Then the War came.

The Labour International fell (as Mr. MacDonald no doubt said) like a house of cards. Labour leaders lined up in platoons before the War Ministries of their various countries—not to protest against war, not to threaten sabotage, not to proclaim the General Strike: but to clamour for salaried positions. That unique internationalist, Mr. H. G. Wells, erupted like an urgent geyser—"every sword drawn against Germany is a sword drawn for peace." (Stout, chubby elderly men in comfortable beds could hardly sleep o' nights for dreaming of the gleaming swords.) Mr. Arthur Henderson became a Cabinet Minister. Miss Marie Corelli wrote a patriotic pamphlet of great richness and ferocity, *What can we do for England?,* and later was fined for hoarding sugar.

The way was clear for Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. He was offered place in the Cabinet by a muddled Government anxious to conciliate this dangerous Parliamentarian. But the Government did not realize that, Parliamentarian or no Parliamentarian, this Scots Labour Leader, predestined the hero of a novelette, could no more break through the Author's plot than one of his favourite amœba could escape its jelly-film. He refused the offer, proclaimed his opposition to the War, and went into the wilderness, dark, tremendous, and Luciferian.

He was to acquire great kudos with this action. His

sincerity in opposing the War is undoubted; his sincerity from those early days in the genteel poverty of Lossiemouth to these modern days as an animated exhibit at the Geological Museum is undoubted. But there can be little doubt that, like Lucifer, he gathered a unique satisfaction from his position—the dauntless tribune (as a Victorian "historical" novelist would have seen him, in genteel toga and side-whiskers) defying the tyrannical Senate and the brutalized plebs. And there can be as little doubt that (as ever) he quite failed to penetrate behind words to that vile reality that the War was. Addressing a conference in 1918 he spoke of the "hot and bloody faces on the Somme, only fanned in death by the wings of the angel." That tumult of fear and filth to Mr. MacDonald was no more than excuse for manipulation of the shoddy platitudes of minor poetasters.

In 1917 came the two Russian Revolutions: the first a proper and praiseworthy revolution, the stegosaurus paring its claws and going out to grass; the second—Mr. MacDonald looked on the second with an astounded, wurring disapproval. It was a quite different beast, not the old, friendly dinosaur at all—an aggressive, alien, froward beast, biologically unsound. In Great Britain a certain amount of sympathy was manifested for the brute by the Labour Movement. This Mr. MacDonald set himself to combat. By 1918, when Leicester refused to re-elect him to Parliament, the battle between Reform and Revolution in the Independent Labour Party was in full swing. By 1920 the revolutionaries had suffered a severe defeat and Mr. MacDonald, still in the wilderness, was building up afresh his war-shattered gospel of "evolutionary Socialism."

"The patriotism which expresses a share in common life felt and valued is of a totally different quality from that which expresses a share in common power. The latter is the patriotism that 'is not enough,' that issues in no fine national spirit, and no sane political judgment. It is a blinding pride, not an enlightening dignity. Therefore political educaton should begin by the cultivation of the tradition of the locality, and democratic government should be founded on the self-government of the local community. 'My fathers' graves are there.' "

What appeal had Lenin and the sovietism of the Third International compared with this clarion call to upbuild

Socialism on the Parish Council heroisms of our fathers—our non-moral, non-economic, but bitterly political fathers?

"In ten years the work of the Bolshevist Government, freed from outside attacks and commanding the necessities of life, will bring Russia to where (and no further) five years of Labour Government in this country, backed by public opinion, would bring us; two years of Bolshevism in this country would bring us where Russia was a dozen years before the Revolution."

That experiment in Labour Government was unafar. In the 1923 Genera! Election, the Conservatives, though numerically superior to either Labour or Liberal representation, found themselves unable to secure Liberal support. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald was summoned to Buckingham Palace; he emerged from it the first Labour Premier. Labour burst into loud pæans.

They were mistimed. Earnest colliers poring over their *Daily Herald* learned astounded of the inclusion of the good and Conservative Lord Chelmsford in the Cabinet. There were other as astonishing personalities. In the Labour Speech from the Throne, a vague Niagara of bubbling sonorosities, nothing of any moment was promised. This was but just anticipation. Nothing was done. The Merciful Knight engaged in nine months' elaborate skirmishing with the Liberals—the radical, undignified, uneasy Liberals pressing him forward to all kinds and manners of dangerous experiments with the economic structure of our island. Mr. MacDonald fought them back at every point: he would consent to the clipping of not a single claw on the stegosaurus' hooves. Dazed Conservatives realized that here was the most Conservative Government since Lord Salisbury's; obstreperous Mesopotamians were bombed with great thoroughness by orders of the Under-Secretary for Air, the personal friend of the Premier, the pacifistic Mr. Leach. The communists —much the same collection of irreligious, vigorous, blasphemous Cockneys as Mr. MacDonald had turned from in a frayed disgust in the eighteen-nineties—began to prove quite as obstreperous as the Mesopotamians. Unfortunately, they could not be bombed. What change was there in the stegosaurus, they cried—except that it ate more flesh? Labour cursed them gruffly, turning trusting eyes to its Premier. He would tell them how the beast

was really changing—he knew about it all, *he* knew, HE knew!

Unfortunately, he was rarely visible on the English horizon. He fled from conference to conference across the European scene; at rare intervals, returning to Parliament, he uttered profound appeals for national unity to save the peace of the world—a world injected with a trilling diapason of consonants and false vowels. In Court dress he displayed an exceptional leg. More and more it was becoming evident to him how necessary was the slow and gradual evolution of human society—retaining dignity, tradition, culture.

But evil men conspired. The communists had taken to appealing directly to soldiers on the subject of the stegosaurus. One of their propagandists was arrested. Labour—uneasy, moody Labour—rumbled in protest and Mr. MacDonald, bestirred from his sane and logical immersements in conference-creation, was reminded that he was a Labour leader. He was prevailed on to have Campbell released. Thereat the Liberals, soured of his tactics, voted out the first Labour Government.

In the succeeding election the stegosaurus lost all sense of honour—a frightened and unsavoury beast. It produced the famous Red Letter, pleasingly forged in Berlin, and proving that Mr. MacDonald took his orders from Moscow. For a moment it seems that Mr. MacDonald caught a glimpse of the reality of the beast he had played with and patted so long—the sterile and unlovely beast he had assured the Labour Movement was really a gentle female beast about to give birth to an unique offspring. Then the smashing defeat at the polls came and he abandoned beast and plebs for the wilderness of opposition. And never, during that period of opposition, did he look again on the horror of the dinosaur's countenance. It was merely a dream he had dreamt: the beast was a comely, if occasionally mistaken beast; and he would soon invite him to ride its back again.

Meanwhile wages sank. The hours of the miners were threatened. Labour, long unused to any other general action than the Parliamentary, sprouted a dangerous revolutionism. It proclaimed the General Strike. For Nine Days that strike paralysed and exhilarated Great Britain. There was a blowing up of a sudden comradeship, a sudden

and astoundingly Marxian class-consciousness. The Government, appalled, determined to arrest the strike leaders. The strike leaders, appalled, determined to save their skins. They abandoned the strike and abandoned thousands of those they had called out to victimization and intimidation. Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Baldwin exchanged courtesies and congratulations in the House of Commons, and sent out bulletins to the effect that the dinosaur was itself again.

Labour turned to Parliamentary organization. As the year of the next General Election drew near it flung all its strength into securing a heavy Parliamentary representation—to secure that way to reform and change which Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and his colleagues had preached since the days of the L.R.C. Its hopes were not disappointed. It returned over two hundred and fifty members to Parliament; it returned Mr. MacDonald to the premiership; in conjunction with the small and radical group of Liberal M.P.'s he was free to display to the doubting Stalin—the abandoned, uncultured, unloquacious Stalin—how a Labour Government worked swift and efficient change the while a Godless Bolshevist one did no more than stumble doggedly forward in the dark.

The stegosaurus' health was far from sound: it complained of internal pains. Breathlessly each morning the Labour voter opened his *Daily Herald* to read the news of the beast's safe delivery in the skilful hands of its midwife, Ramsay MacDonald But still the news delayed. Mr. MacDonald instead began to issue bulletins—quite unexpected bulletins—about the beast. Copulation and pregnancy were indecencies foreign to the dinosaur's nature. It was a cultured, amiable and happy beast—but for those pains. It was the duty of all men and women of good will to pool their resources to save the health of this happy, innocent animal. . . . Between whiles, as in 1924, he sped rapidly about the European scene. He crossed to America and held a conference with President Hoover. Still the dinosaur languished. Mr. MacDonald laid before his colleagues of the Labour Cabinet his plan to reduce unemployed relief to provide fresh rations for the monster's table. He did this with wrung withers, but the bankers, the dinosaur's physicians, saw no other way to save its life. . . .

One abandons dinosaur (a very real beast) and simile with regret. It may be admitted that MacDonald's colleagues, refusing to agree with this final onslaught on the standard of that dumb, patient puzzled horde that had elevated them to Parliamentary position, abandoned the beast with regret as well, in spite of the feeble flare of revolutionary zeal they displayed when their late leader appeared—still Premier—at the head of his "National Government,' backed by row on row of that enemy against which so long and so often he had swung his padded mace. But outside the House of Commons there arose a slow creaking and cracking and spiralling of dust—it was the Labour Movement crumbling to dust. At the 1931 General Election, leading the combined Liberals and Conservatives, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald completed his task of wreckage. On the morning of October the 29th, 1931, the country awoke to find that the pacifist of the War-time years had for once abandoned the padded bludgeon and smashed to atoms with a merciless blow that party and group which had raised him to power, which had followed him and his unique philosophy for a long twenty-five years.

The Labour Movement may win again to shadowy triumphs, but the spirit, the faith and the hope have gone from it. Time, impatient, has turned its back on new re-echoings of those thunderous platitudes which once seemed to ring prophet-inspired from a MacDonald platform. New armies are rising, brutal and quick, determined, desperate, mutually destructive, communist and fascist. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald has completed to perfection the task set him by the play of historic movements and blind economic forces. He still hastens from conference to conference, solemn and creased; his voice still rings out those rolling periods; he poses, one foot on the step of his aeroplane, for the pressing photographer——

But there is a greyness and chill come upon it all. One realizes that this is hardly a living human being at all, but a hollow simulacrum. One realizes with a start of enlightenment that indeed there was never life here at all, it was a fantasy, a play of the jaded Victorian sense, a materialization of some hazy lady novelist's dreams after reading Samuel Smiles as a bed book. Even so, there are moments when the presence touches raw nerves: this ghost delays so long on the boards of history, unhumorous, un-

appeasable. There is hardly a Scotsman alive who does not feel a shudder of amused shame as the rolling turgid voice, this evening or that, pours suddenly from his radio. We have, we Scots (all of us), too much of his quality in our hearts and souls.

§ 5.

NEWSREEL

THE B.B.C. is sometimes criticized for lack of variety in its programmes, but any fair-minded listener-in must confess that a great amount of originality is shown in the selection. One of the most original broadcasts is unquestionably that announced one day this week of giving a broadcast from the Scottish Zoo in Edinburgh. Hyenas, leopards, bears, sea lions, chimpanzees, baboons, cockatoos, penguins and other "vocal" denizens were induced to participate in a broadcast, and this is no mean achievement in regard to such "temperamental" performers, who are apt to regard anything in the way of wires and flexes as belonging to the snake tribe.

The Weekly Scotsman.

One of the most remarkable items of our local news has been a prolonged monkey-hunt which has been proceeding in several quarters of the city. There are so many trees about Edinburgh that I should imagine it ought to be a desirable residential district from a monkey's point of view.

Scots Observer.

As you walk about the streets of the Edinburgh business quarters you can recognize the bookmakers' offices from those of lawyers and commercial houses by the number of workers at desks behind the window-screens, and by the clatter of typewriters that fills the street.

Scots Observer.

At the concluding meeting of the organizing committee of the Edinburgh Scott Centenary Pageant a member told the following story. During the run of the Pageant

school-children were given half-day holidays. One little boy arriving home from school unexpectedly was asked by his father the reason for coming home so soon. "We've got a holiday for Scott." "For whom?" "For Scott," said the boy, and in further explanation remarked, "You know Scott the novelist. He's dead." "Scott the novelist," said the father, "I know he's dead. He was dead when I was at school, but we didn't get a holiday for it."

Edinburgh Evening News.

I was interested to observe that a notable Edinburgh divine brought down a stag the other day in one of our fine northern forests. Had he any reason to be ashamed of his lapse from the humanitarian proprieties? I trow not; and if rulers of states and ministers of the gospels can indulge in this sport why not people of lower degree or less learning?

Angus Henderson in the *Scots Observer.*

The poor folks of Edinburgh have discovered that poetry and other forms of art are being produced in Scotland. That is to say, they are taking the trouble at least to write to the papers to say that Scottish poetry is not being produced by the people who are claimed as Scottish poets. This would appear to indicate very definite progress; since it is a novelty to see these matters being discussed by the general public at all.

Scots Observer.

In Edinburgh the poor student finds little opportunity for taking part in the life of the student community. The Union and the Athletic Club are practically barred to the man whose funds are very limited. To most students, too, the extra half-guinea now charged on the matriculation fee, nominally for physical training and athletic purposes, is little more than an impost.

The Weekly Scotsman.

No general corporate life, common to all faculties, exists in Edinburgh University, except amongst an exclusive coterie, and that not always of the best type of student.

The Weekly Scotsman.

Professor Julius Hecker, of Moscow, had come straight from the Easter Conference of the Society of Friends and a huge meeting of the Free Church clergy of London and district. He returned to lecture for three months at Woodbrooke College, after fulfilling engagements with societies of the Church of England—under the chairmanship of men like Canon Streeter—and the Methodist Church. But in Scotland he is just "one of those dirty Bolshies." And those of us who listen to him are no better. O Scotland, the lover of freedom, and the friend of the lonely Christian fighter!

Rev. J. W. Stevenson in the *Scots Observer.*

The authentic Scottish atmosphere was created on Tuesday at the annual dinner of the Edinburgh Highland Reel and Strathspey Society. As I seem to remember having said before there is a smeddum about these Highland tunes, with their dance-rhythms and barbarous modes, that rouses me to a pitch of enthusiasm. There is a commonplace jibe among the more thowless musicians who browse the cultured postures of Haydn and Mozart, that for weeks before the "hunder fiddlers" of the E.H.R. and S.S. are due to give their concert there is not a bit of resin to be had in the town for love or money!

Scots Observer.

Edinburgh is full of surprises, not the least of which is the manner in which its streets are apt to leap over one another, or to burrow beneath in tunnels.

Scots Observer.

An interesting exhibition of dancing and instrumental music was given in Edinburgh last week by the pupils of the Misses Pratt. The items ranged from dances performed by middle-sized to small, and very small, children: one of the most amusing being called "Bunny Rabbit."

Scots Observer.

The Edinburgh Church authorities are in the peculiar position of being embarrassed by the possession of a newly-built church for which they cannot find a congregation. It seems unfortunate in some ways that the great sum of money that was left to the Church for the purpose of building the Reid Memorial could not have been diverted,

during these hard times, to some purpose of more obvious utility. We have already in the city such a very great number of churches, most of which have accommodation for more worshippers than are to be found occupying their pews, that a new church is rather an awkward gift.

Scots Observer.

The Scottish Travel Association announced that the official kinematographers to the Association have now completed distribution arrangements in the West Indies, Venezuela, and the west coast of Africa for the two scenic reels of Scotland made last summer. A big influx of Hottentot holiday-makers is confidently anticipated next season.

Scots Observer.

Last week we were told that there was a "terrific battle at St. Andrews". There were also some "tragic failures." Yet all that happened at St. Andrews was that a number of young men were competing in an old man's game, to see who could knock a ball across the links and into a certain number of holes in the fewest strokes.

Scottish Educational Journal.

The Prime Minister must have a sheaf of press cuttings as high as the Tower of Babel. At the present time he and Mr. Roosevelt share between them the honours of the most laudatory notices. It is safe to say there is no paper in the world, with any pretensions to being a newspaper, which does not feature Mr. MacDonald.

Scots Observer.

To be a member of Parliament has been the ideal of many of us. It had been mine for long, and now the years are slipping away, and the ideal is hopeless, but "bode a silk goon and ye'll get the sleeve o't." . . . Some months ago the Secretary of State for Scotland had appointed her a member of the Extra Parliamentary Panel under the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act. And ever since she had not been sure whether she was a member of the House of Lords or a member of the House of Commons; or both.

Lady Leslie Mackenzie in *The Scotsman.*

SECTION THE THIRD

§ 1. Short Story — Lewis Grassic Gibbon

SMEDDUM

She'd had nine of a family in her time, Mistress Menzies, and brought the nine of them up, forbye—some near by the scruff of the neck, you would say. They were sniftering and weakly, two-three of the bairns, sniftering in their cradles to get into their coffins; but she'd shake them to life, and dose them with salts and feed them up till they couldn't but live. And she'd plonk one down—finishing the wiping of the creature's neb or the unco dosing of an ill bit stomach or the binding of a broken head—with a look on her face as much as to say *Die on me now and see what you'll get!*

Big-boned she was by her fortieth year, like a big roan mare, and *If ever she was bonny 'twas in Noah's time,* Jock Menzies, her eldest son would say. She'd reddish hair and a high, skeugh nose, and a hand that skelped her way through life; and if ever a soul had seen her at rest when the dark was done and the day was come he'd died of the shock and never let on.

For from morn till night she was at it, work, work, on that ill bit croft that sloped to the sea. When there wasn't a mist on the cold, stone parks there was more than likely the wheep of the rain, wheeling and dripping in from the sea that soughed and plashed by the land's stiff edge. Kinneff lay north, and at night in the south, if the sky was clear on the gloaming's edge, you'd see in that sky the Bervie lights come suddenly lit, far and away, with the quiet about you as you stood and looked, nothing to hear but a sea-bird's cry.

But feint the much time to look or to listen had Margaret Menzies of Tocherty toun. Day blinked and Meg did

the same, and was out, up out of her bed, and about the house, making the porridge and rousting the bairns, and out to the byre to milk the three kye, the morning growing out in the east and a wind like a hail of knives from the hills. Syne back to the kitchen again she would be, and catch Jock, her eldest, a clour in the lug that he hadn't roused up his sisters and brothers; and rouse them herself, and feed them and scold, pull up their breeks and straighten their frocks, and polish their shoes and set their caps straight. *Off you get and see you're not late,* she would cry, *and see you behave yourselves at the school. And tell the Dominie I'll be down the night to ask him what the mischief he meant by leathering Jeannie and her not well.*

They'd cry *Ay, Mother,* and go trotting away, a fair flock of the creatures, their faces red-scoured. Her own as red, like a meikle roan mare's, Meg'd turn at the door and go prancing in; and then at last, by the closet-bed, lean over and shake her man half-awake. *Come on, then, Willie, it's time you were up.*

And he'd groan and say *Is't?* and crawl out at last, a little bit thing like a weasel, Will Menzies, though some said that weasels were decent beside him. He was drinking himself into the grave, folk said, as coarse a little brute as you'd meet, bone-lazy forbye, and as sly as sin. Rampageous and ill with her tongue though she was, you couldn't but pity a woman like Meg tied up for life to a thing like *that.* But she'd more than a soft side still to the creature, she'd half-skelp the backside from any of the bairns she found in the telling of a small bit lie; but when Menzies would come paiching in of a noon and groan that he fair was tashed with his work, he'd mended all the ley fence that day and he doubted he'd need to be off to his bed —when he'd told her that and had ta'en to the blankets, and maybe in less than the space of an hour she'd hold out for the kye and see that he'd lied, the fence neither mended nor letten a-be, she'd just purse up her meikle wide mouth and say nothing, her eyes with a glint as though she half-laughed. And when he came drunken home from a mart she'd shoo the children out of the room, and take off his clothes and put him to bed, with an extra nip to keep off a chill.

She did half his work in the Tocherty parks, she'd yoke up the horse and the sholtie together, and kilt up her

skirts till you'd see her great legs, and cry *Wissh!* like a man and turn a fair drill, the sea-gulls cawing in a cloud behind, the wind in her hair and the sea beyond. And Menzies with his sly-like eyes would be off on some drunken ploy to Kineff or Stonehive. Man, you couldn't but think as you saw that steer it was well that there was a thing like marriage, folk held together and couldn't get apart; else a black look-out it well would be for the fusionless creature of Tocherty toun.

Well, he drank himself to his grave at last, less smell on the earth if maybe more in it. But she broke down and wept, it was awful to see, Meg Menzies weeping like a stricken horse, her eyes on the dead, quiet face of her man. And she ran from the house, she was gone all that night, though the bairns cried and cried her name up and down the parks in the sound of the sea. But next morning they found her back in their midst, brisk as ever, like a great-boned mare, ordering here and directing there, and a fine feed set the next day for the folk that came to the funeral of her orra man.

She'd four of the bairns at home when he died, the rest were in kitchen-service or fee'd, she'd seen to the settling of the queans herself; and twice when two of them had come home, complaining-like of their mistresses' ways, she'd thrashen the queans and taken them back—near scared the life from the doctor's wife, her that was mistress to young Jean Menzies. *I've skelped the lassie and brought you her back. But don't you ill-use her, or I'll skelp you as well.*

There was a fair speak about that at the time, Meg Menzies and the vulgar words she had used, folk told that she'd even said what was the place where she'd skelp the bit doctor's wife. And faith! that fair must have been a sore shock to the doctor's wife that was that genteel she'd never believed she'd a place like that.

Be that as it might, her man new dead, Meg wouldn't hear of leaving the toun. It was harvest then and she drove the reaper up and down the long, clanging clay rigs by the sea, she'd jump down smart at the head of a bout and go gathering and binding swift as the wind, syne wheel in the horse to the cutting again. She led the stooks with her bairns to help, you'd see them at night a drowsing cluster under the moon on the harvesting cart.

And through that year and into the next and so till the speak died down in the Howe Meg Menzies worked the Tocherty toun; and faith, her crops came none so ill. She rode to the mart at Stonehive when she must, on the old box-cart, the old horse in the shafts, the cart behind with a sheep for sale or a birn of old hens that had finished with laying. And a butcher once tried to make a bit joke. *That's a sheep like yourself, fell long in the tooth.* And Meg answered up, neighing like a horse, and all heard: *Faith, then, if you've got a spite against teeth I've a clucking hen in the cart outbye. It's as toothless and senseless as you are, near.*

Then word got about of her eldest son, Jock Menzies that was fee'd up Allardyce way. The creature of a loon had had fair a conceit since he'd won a prize at a ploughing match—not for his ploughing, but for good looks; and the queans about were as daft as himself, he'd only to nod and they came to his heel; and the stories told they came further than that. Well, Meg'd heard the stories and paid no heed, till the last one came, she was fell quick then.

Soon's she heard it she hove out the old bit bike that her daughter Kathie had bought for herself, and got on the thing and went cycling away down through the Bervie braes in that Spring, the sun was out and the land lay green with a blink of mist that was blue on the hills, as she came to the toun where Jock was fee'd she saw him out in a park by the road, ploughing, the black loam smooth like a ribbon turning and wheeling at the tail of the plough. Another billy came ploughing behind, Meg Menzies watched till they reached the rig-end, her great chest heaving like a meikle roan's, her eyes on the shape of the furrows they made. And they drew to the end and drew the horse out, and Jock cried *Ay,* and she answered back *Ay,* and looked at the drill, and gave a bit snort, *If your looks win prizes, your ploughing never will.*

Jock laughed, *Fegs, then, I'll not greet for that,* and chirked to his horses and turned them about. But she cried him *Just bide a minute, my lad. What's this I hear about you and Ag Grant?*

He drew up short then, and turned right red, the other childe as well, and they both gave a laugh, as ploughchildes do when you mention a quean they've known overwell in more ways than one. And Meg snapped *It's an*

answer I want, not a cockerel's cackle: I can hear that at home on my own dunghill. What are you to do about Ag and her pleiter?

And Jock said *Nothing,* impudent as you like, and next minute Meg was in over the dyke and had hold of his lug and shook him and it till the other childe ran and caught at her nieve. *Faith, mistress, you'll have his lug off!* he cried. But Meg Menzies turned like a mare on new grass, *Keep off or I'll have yours off as well!*

So he kept off and watched, fair a story he'd to tell when he rode out that night to go courting his quean. For Meg held to the lug till it near came off and Jock swore that he'd put things right with Ag Grant. She let go the lug then and looked at him grim: *See that you do and get married right quick, you're the like that needs loaded with a birn of bairns—to keep you out of the jail, I jaloose. It needs smeddum to be either right coarse or right kind.*

They were wed before the month was well out, Meg found them a cottar house to settle and gave them a bed and a press she had, and two-three more sticks from Tocherty toun. And she herself led the wedding dance, the minister in her arms, a small bit childe; and 'twas then as she whirled him about the room, he looked like a rat in the teeth of a tyke, that he thanked her for seeing Ag out of her soss, *There's nothing like a marriage for redding things up.* And Meg Menzies said *EH?* and then she said *Ay,* but queer-like, he supposed she'd no thought of the thing. Syne she slipped off to sprinkle thorns in the bed and to hang below it the great hand-bell that the bothy-billies took them to every bit marriage.

Well, that was Jock married and at last off her hands. But she'd plenty left still, Dod, Kathleen and Jim that were still at school, Kathie a limner that alone tongued her mother, Jeannie that next led trouble to her door. She'd been found at her place, the doctor's it was, stealing some money and they sent her home. Syne news of the thing got into Stonehive, the police came out and tormented her sore, she swore she never had stolen a meck, and Meg swore with her, she was black with rage. And folk laughed right hearty, fegs! that was a clour for meikle Meg Menzies, her daughter a thief!

But it didn't last long, it was only three days when folk

saw the doctor drive up in his car. And out he jumped and went striding through the close and met face to face with Meg at the door. And he cried *Well, mistress, I've come over for Jeannie.* And she glared at him over her high, skeugh nose, *Ay, have you so then? And why, may I speir?*

So he told her why, the money they'd missed had been found at last in a press by the door; somebody or other had left it there, when paying a grocer or such at the door. And Jeannie—he'd come over to take Jean back.

But Meg glared *Ay, well, you've made another mistake. Out of this, you and your thieving suspicions together!* The doctor turned red, *You're making a miserable error*—and Meg said *I'll make you mince-meat in a minute.*

So he didn't wait that, she didn't watch him go, but went ben to the kitchen where Jeannie was sitting, her face chalk-white as she'd heard them speak. And what happened then a story went round, Jim carried it to school, and it soon spread out, Meg sank in a chair, they thought she was greeting; syne she raised up her head and they saw she was laughing, near as fearsome the one as the other, they thought. *Have you any cigarettes?* she snapped sudden at Jean, and Jean quavered *No,* and Meg glowered at her cold. *Don't sit there and lie. Gang bring them to me.* And Jean brought them, her mother took the pack in her hand. *Give's hold of a match till I light up the thing. Maybe smoke'll do good for the crow that I got in the throat last night by the doctor's house.*

Well, in less than a month she'd got rid of Jean—packed off to Brechin the quean was, and soon got married to a creature there—some clerk that would have left her sore in the lurch but that Meg went down to the place on her bike, and there, so the story went, kicked the childe so that he couldn't sit down for a fortnight, near. No doubt that was just a bit lie that they told, but faith! Meg Menzies had herself to blame, the reputation she'd gotten in the Howe, folk said, *She'll meet with a sore heart yet.* But devil a sore was there to be seen, Jeannie was married and was fair genteel.

Kathleen was next to leave home at the term. She was tall, like Meg, and with red hair as well, but a thin fine face, long eyes blue-grey like the hills on a hot day, and a mouth with lips you thought over thick. And she cried

Ah well, I'm off then, mother. And Meg cried *See you behave yourself.* And Kathleen cried *Maybe; I'm not at school now.*

Meg stood and stared after the slip of a quean, you'd have thought her half-angry, half near to laughing, as she watched that figure, so slender and trig, with its shoulders square-set, slide down the hill on the wheeling bike, swallows were dipping and flying by Kinneff, she looked light and free as a swallow herself, the quean, as she biked away from her home, she turned at the bend and waved and whistled, she whistled like a loon and as loud, did Kath.

Jim was the next to leave from the school, he bided at home and he took no fee, a quiet-like loon, and he worked the toun, and, wonder of wonders, Meg took a rest. Folk said that age was telling a bit on even Meg Menzies at last. The grocer made hints at that one night, and Meg answered up smart as ever of old: *Damn the age! But I've finished the trauchle of the bairns at last, the most of them married or still over young. I'm as swack as ever I was, my lad. But I've just got the notion to be a bit sweir.*

Well, she'd hardly begun on that notion when faith! ill the news that came up to the place from Segget. Kathleen her quean that was fee'd down there, she'd ta'en up with some coarse old childe in a bank, he'd left his wife, they were off together, and she but a bare sixteen years old.

And that proved the truth of what folk were saying, Meg Menzies she hardly paid heed to the news, just gave a bit laugh like a neighing horse and went on with the work of park and byre, cool as you please—ay, getting fell old.

No more was heard of the quean or the man till a two years or more had passed and then word came up to the Tocherty someone had seen her—and where do you think? Out on a boat that was coming from Australia. She was working as stewardess on that bit boat, and the childe that saw her was young John Robb, an emigrant back from his uncle's farm, near starved to death he had been down there. She hadn't met in with him near till the end, the boat close to Southampton the evening they met. And she'd known him at once, though he not her, she'd cried *John Robb?* and he'd answered back *Ay?* and looked at her canny in case it might be the creature was looking for a tip from him. Syne she'd laughed *Don't you know me, then, you*

gowk? I'm Kathie Menzies you knew long syne—it was me ran off with the banker from Segget!

He was clean dumbfounded, young Robb, and he gaped, and then they shook hands and she spoke some more, though she hadn't much time, they were serving up dinner for the first-class folk, aye dirt that are ready to eat and to drink. *If ever you get near to Tocherty toun tell Meg I'll get home and see her some time. Ta-ta!* And then she was off with a smile, young Robb he stood and he stared where she'd been, he thought her the bonniest thing that he'd seen all the weary weeks that he'd been from home.

And this was the tale that he brought to Tocherty, Meg sat and listened and smoked like a tink, forbye herself there was young Jim there, and Jock and his wife and their three bit bairns, he'd fair changed with marriage, had young Jock Menzies. For no sooner had he taken Ag Grant to his bed than he'd starved to save, grown mean as dirt, in a three-four years he's finished with feeing, now he rented a fell big farm himself, well stocked it was, and he fee'd two men. Jock himself had grown thin in a way, like his father but worse his bothy childes said, old Menzies at least could take a bit dram and get lost to the world but the son was that mean he might drink rat-poison and take no harm, 'twould feel at home in a stomach like his.

Well, that was Jock, and he sat and heard the story of Kath and her say on the boat. *Ay, still a coarse bitch, I have not a doubt. Well if she never comes back to the Mearns, in Segget you cannot but redden with shame when a body will ask 'Was Kath Menzies your sister?'*

And Ag, she'd grown a great sumph of a woman, she nodded to that, it was only too true, a sore thing it was on decent bit folks that they should have any relations like Kath.

But Meg just sat there and smoked and said never a word, as though she thought nothing worth a yea or a nay. Young Robb had fair ta'en a fancy to Kath and he near boiled up when he heard Jock speak, him and the wife that he'd married from her shame. So he left them short and went raging home, and wished for one that Kath would come back, a Summer noon as he cycled home, snipe were calling in the Auchindreich moor where the cattle stood with their tails a-switch, the Grampians rising far and behind, Kinraddie spread like a map for show, its ledges

veiled in a mist from the sun. You felt on that day a wild, daft unease, man, beast and bird: as though something were missing and lost from the world, and Kath was the thing that John Robb missed, she'd something in her that minded a man of a house that was builded upon a hill.

Folk thought that maybe the last they would hear of young Kath Menzies and her ill-gettèd ways. So fair stammy-gastered they were with the news she'd come back to the Mearns, she was down in Stonehive, in a grocer's shop, as calm as could be, selling out tea and cheese and such-like with no blush of shame on her face at all, to decent women that were properly wed and had never looked on men but their own, and only on them with their braces buttoned.

It just showed you the way that the world was going to allow an ill quean like that in a shop, some folk protested to the creature that owned it, but he just shook his head, *Ah well, she works fine; and what else she does is no business of mine.* So you well might guess there was more than business between the man and Kath Menzies, like.

And Meg heard the news and went into Stonehive, driving her sholtie, and stopped at the shop. And some in the shop knew who she was and minded the things she had done long syne to other bit bairns of hers that went wrong; and they waited with their breaths held up with delight. But all that Meg did was to nod to Kath *Ay, well, then, it's you—Ay, mother, just that—Two pounds of syrup and see that it's good.*

And not another word passed between them, Meg Menzies that once would have ta'en such a quean and skelped her to rights before you could wink. Going home from Stonehive she stopped by the farm where young Robb was fee'd, he was out in the hayfield coling the hay, and she nodded to him grim, with her high horse face. *What's this that I hear about you and Kath Menzies?*

He turned right red, but he wasn't ashamed. *I've no idea—though I hope it's the worse——It fell near is——Then I wish it was true, she might marry me, then, as I've prigged her to do.*

Oh, have you so, then? said Meg, and drove home, as though the whole matter was a nothing to her.

But next Tuesday the postman brought a bit note, from Kathie it was to her mother at Tocherty. *Dear mother,*

John Robb's going out to Canada and wants me to marry him and go with him. I've told him instead I'll go with him and see what he's like as a man—and then marry him at leisure, if I feel in the mood. But he's hardly any money, and we want to borrow some, so he and I are coming over on Sunday. I hope that you'll have dumpling for tea. Your own daughter, Kath.

Well, Meg passed that letter over to Jim, he glowered at it dour, *I know—near all the Howe's heard. What are you going to do, now, mother?*

But Meg just lighted a cigarette and said nothing, she'd smoked like a tink since that steer with Jean. There was promise of strange on-goings at Tocherty by the time that the Sabbath day was come. For Jock came there on a visit as well, him and his wife, and besides him was Jeannie, her that had married the clerk down in Brechin, and she brought the bit creature, he fair was a toff; and he stepped like a cat through the sharn in the close; and when he had heard the story of Kath, her and her plan and John Robb and all, he was shocked near to death, and so was his wife. And Jock Menzies gaped and gave a mean laugh. *Ay, coarse to the bone, ill-gettèd I'd say if it wasn't that we come of the same bit stock. Ah well, she'll fair have to tramp to Canada, eh mother?—if she's looking for money from you.*

And Meg answered quiet *No, I wouldn't say that. I've the money all ready for them when they come.*

You could hear the sea plashing down soft on the rocks, there was such a dead silence in Tocherty house. And then Jock habbered like a cock with fits *What, give silver to one who does as she likes, and won't marry as you made the rest of us marry? Give silver to one who's no more than a——*

And he called his sister an ill name enough, and Meg sat and smoked looking over the parks. *Ay, just that. You see, she takes after myself.*

And Jeannie squeaked *How?* and Meg answered her quiet: *She's fit to be free and to make her own choice the same as myself and the same kind of choice. There was none of the rest of you fit to do that, you'd to marry or burn, so I married you quick. But Kath and me could afford to find out. It all depends if you've smeddum or not.*

She stood up then and put her cigarette out, and looked

at the gaping gowks she had mothered. *I never married your father, you see. I could never make up my mind about Will. But maybe our Kath will find something surer. . . . Here's her and her man coming up the road.*

§ 2. PLAY — HUGH MACDIARMID

SOME DAY

Scene:—A winter afternoon. An ordinary Scots lower middle-class kitchen. Round the fire are John Macfarlane, a rugged middle-aged man whose natural bluffness is overclouded by a mixture of awe, bewilderment and humility: his elder daughter Polly, thin-lipped, severe-looking, in the thirties: his younger daughter Jeannie, a fine lively girl in her late teens, obviously excited. Both are intent on their father's cautious, hesitant narrative: but while Jeannie is obviously all agog, Polly affects a sort of disdainful impatience, and knits away as if to say "Talking's all right—and I suppose the thing's got to be discussed—but one can talk and work. But in this house I've got to do anything that's done. Jean never puts her hand to a mortal thing: and Father's too soft to notice how idle she is. If Mother had been alive . . ."

Macfarlane:—Mony's the funeral o' man an' wumman an' bairn I've seen at Sleepyhillock i' the past forty or fifty years. There's a gey population there noo. A' kinds—auld an' young—deein' in a' kind o' ways. Maist o' them i' the ordinary coorse o' natur'—an' yet ye'd wunner . . . accidents, suicides, aye, an' even murders. Twa at ony rate. Na, three—i' my time. An' that's no mentionin' auld Mrs. Peters, puir body. But the richts or wrangs o' that were nivur f'un out—or made public. Some thocht ae thing, an' some anither. . . . But a' through I've seen nocht tae approach the day's ongangan's no' even the biggin' o' auld Granny Nisbet's airch. . . .

Jeannie:—Oh, what was that father?

Polly:—Ye've heard the story owre and owre, Jean.

Jeannie:—What about it? I've nivur heard Faither on't.

Macfarlane:—Deed, there's no muckle tae tell. She was a bit lame body, an' as perjink as they mak' them. 'Ears afore she dee'd she had the airch made—an' it's there

to this day, but gey ill to see unless ye ken juist whaur to look, owin' to the way the plantation's grown fornenst the wa' . . . I juist min' o' her an nae mair, gaen' hirplin' aboot, an' a tongue that wad clip cloots. But the biggin' o' the airch made a gey like stir at the time. Ye see she's a lair next the wa'. An' she wad hae an airch biggit i' the wa', aye, an' steepulated i' her wull that she sud be buriet wi' her feet pointin' that airt. . . . She didna' mean tae be behindhand whan the Resurrection comes. "I'm a wee wumman," she yaist to say, "an' a crippled ane at that,—an', seein' whaur ma bit grun' is, the feck o' the folk'd be up an' oot and owre the hill afore I kent whaur I was. I'm a lang wey frae the yett, an' I could never sclim' the wa'." . . . So she'd her airch put intae the wa' to gi'e her a fair chance wi' the lave. It cost her a braw penny. An' the Pairish meenister mad' a sermon o't—takin' for his text 'The Deil ta' the hindmost.' Opeenion was sair divided wi' regard to the maitter. Fowk didna ken whether to lauch at the auld wumman or gin there michnta be somethin' in't efter a', or gin it wasna juist eindoon supersteetion. She yaist to talk in a silly kind o' way aboot the Last Day. "It'll be a sair how-dye-doo, I'm thinkin'," an' her remark as lang debatt i' the Pairish. It seemed to thraw a kind o' queer licht on the Resurrection. It was deeficult to ken what to mak' on't. . . .

Jeannie:—Aye. It mak's yin think.

Polly:—It depends what she meant. But as for the airch the deid'll rise in a different frame o' min', I'm thinking. There'll no' be ony siccan rush.

Jeannie (seriously):—Ye nivur ken.

Macfarlane:—But I've nivur seen onything the equal o' the day's ongangin's.

Polly (impatiently):—What juist did tak' place?

Jeannie:—The warst o't was that naethin' happen't—as it sud. Wasn't that it, faither?

Macfarlane:—Weel, yin micht gae the length o' sayin' that, Jeannie, yin micht sae that. . . . (*Turning to Polly*) —Whan the coffin was lower't into the grave, Hugh an' Alick kneelt doon by the gravemou', an' baith cried oot in a muckle voice. "I' the name o' Jesus, Arise!" Ye could ha'e knocked doon the hale jing bang o's wi' a duster. It was sic' an unlooked-for thing. We didna' ken whaur to look or what to dae. There bein' nae meenister there

made it a' the waur. There was naebody ye could look to —naebody to gie's a lead, as 'twere. Sprung on's suddenly that wey, it was deeficult to ken hoo to tak' it—whether to approve o't, or to regaird is as pure blasphemy, or to keep an open mind. I was fair at sixes an' seevins wi' mysel'. . . . No' that I didna sympathize wi' the lads, of coorse . . . but, somehow, it wasna canny. It didna seem richt.

Jeannie:—Why ever no'?

Macfarlane (confused):—Well, it's no' easy to say. We a' believe i' redemption thro' the grace o' the Lord Jesus Christ—every yin o's—an' in the resurrection frae the grave. But still an' on . . .

Polly (roused):—It was an' awfu' like way o' daein'. Silly laddies like Hugh an' Alick sud nivur hae been allo'ed to hae their way i' a maitter o' that kind. I dinna ken hoo they'd the hert . . their ain mither! I dinna suppose either of them shed a single tear. It's no' natural. Folk's that's makin' the best o' this life dinna worry muckle about the neist. Hugh M'Taggart'd be better employed playin' fitba than prayin' . . . an' as for seekin' to perpetuate his puir auld mither, wha's she that he sud he'e nae een i' his heid for the lassies he'd be coortin' gin he was a man ava. . . . Can you really imagine RESURRECTION DAY at Sleppy-hillock . . . a' the graves crackin' open an' the fowk loupin' oot. No' me. . . . There'd be some gey objects amang them. Mony o' them was be better bidin' whaur they are . . . aye, an' kent it themsel's when they dee'd.

Macfarlane:—Weel, they were baith deid calm an' as confident as ye like. A' the rest o's were verra far frae either, I can tell ye.

Jeannie:—But they believed in what they were daein'!

Macfarlane:—Oh, aye. They were baith i' deid earnest. There was nae doot aboot that.

Jeannie:—An' efter a' if miracles could happen i' Palestine lang syne what's to hinder them happenin' i' Scotland noo?

Polly:—But it was Jesus wha performed the miracles himsel'.

Jeannie:—But the Bible says gin ye've as muckle faith as a grain o' mustard seed ye can move mountains. An' I believe baith Hugh an' Alick had as muckle faith as onybody ever could hae. (*Turning to her father.*) The rest o' ye were confused juist because ye didna believe richt

thro' an' thro', beyond a shadow o' doot the way they did. It's a kind o' death in itsel'—this sayin' "I believe, I believe" until yin really thinks yin does, an' hasna an honest doubt or a real live hope left. If I didna believe onything mucht happen ony meenut I'd become a doonricht atheist.

Macfarlane:—I dinna ken. But juist suppose for the sake o' argument that their faith had been rewarded there an' then. Suppose a bit cry had come frae Mrs. M'Taggart's coffin doon there—what then? An' they'd hauled it up an burst aff the lid, an' she steppit oot again as large as life? . . . Half the population o' Scotland would ha'e been here the morn. An' the rest o' the warl' afore the en' o' the week. The papers would ha'e been fou' o' nocht else. The hale coorse o' history would ha'e been changed. . . . I'm no' sure it would ha'e bin for the best.

Jeannie (in sharp protest):—Faither!

Macfarlane (doggedly):—Weel, I'm no'. I believe i' Heaven an' i' reunion there wi' oor loved yins. But I honestly confess I wadna' like to ha'e seen Mrs. M'Taggart brocht back to life . . . an' yer mither lyin' there a' thae years . . . an' my faither an' mither . . . an' a' the ither deid men an' weemun an' bairns I kent. But, mind ye for a meenut or twa, every yin o' us felt that something wad happen. In a way we were prepared for't. We wadna ha'e been surprised at onything. There was something in the way it a' happened, in the way Hugh and Alec behaved, that fair took awa' a' oor poo'ers o' thocht. Their voices rong oot like commands that couldna be ignored.

Polly:—It was takin' the Lord's name i' vain. Neither mair or less. There's a hantle difference atween a prayer an' a command. Hugh M'Taggart's no' in a position yet to gi'e his orders to Almichty God.

Jeannie:—They didna mean't that way, as ye weel ken. They had faith. An' noo they've lost it, it's mair than likely. Ye couldna blame them if they've turned into pure atheists. It's lang time sin' Jesus raised Lazarus. It's high time it was happenin' again. Even yae case 'ud gang a fell long way. Fowks losing faith, an' nae wunner. The kirks ar a' gaen back an' back. It wad ha'e dune a pooer o' guid. I'm deid sorry for Hugh an' Alec. If there's a man I ken guid eneuch to perform miracles it's Hugh M'Taggart (blushes as Polly looks at her). It's true.

Polly:—Muckle learnin's made him mad. I dinna haud wi' this faith-healin' ava', an' neither does God apparently. It's fair fleein' i' the face o' Providence. Hugh's got his heid swelled at the College. He'd be better advised to be studyin' the things he needs to study. Christian Science 'll no tak' him fer i' the teachin' profession, even as things are ga'en noo-a-days. An' he's leadin' Alick fair aff his feet tae. . . . Noo look here, faither, gin I was to say to ye, ye'll no' dee. Ye're gaen to be the a'e exception. Ye'll leeve for ever . . . ye'd think I was oot o' my heid a'thegither. . . . An' I wad be tae . . . but gin it was true, an' ye kent it was true, wad ye like it?

Macfarlane:—Weel.——

Polly:—Feint a bit. Ye'd be the maist miserable man the warl' ever saw. Ye ken yersel' ye'd be far better deid. . . . It's got to be a'body or naebody, an a' the same time, if there's to be ony Resurrection at a'. An' even then it'd be a fell queer mix-up. Eternal life'd be a gey puir thing compared with this. If it wasna for disease an' death life wadna' be worth leevin'. . . . Och, I believe in a life beyond the grave . . . but I canna imagine ony that'd be worth ha'en. An' I dinna think onybody else can. I've nivur heard ony Heevun described yet that ony sensible body could tolerate for a . . .

Jeannie (who has been following her own thoughts):—It's my belief Mrs. M'Taggart wad nivur ha'e dee'd at a' if Hugh had been at hame. The doctors expected her to dee months an' months syne. They canna mak' oot hoo she kept on leevin' ava'. But she wadna let Alec sen' for Hugh i' time. She did improve wonderfu' efter Hugh cam'. The doctors were fair dumfoonert. If Hugh'd come a day or twa sooner he'd ha'e pulled her thro' a'thegither. But she'd let things gang owre far afore she sent for'm. She didna ge'e'm a chance. . . . It's a puir kin' o' God that canna reward faith like that yince in a while.

Polly:—Jean! Faither! D'ye hear her—but ye're as bad yersel'!

Macfarlane (who has been sitting completely bemused):—. . . Ech! Oh, it's deeficult to ken what to think. Weel, as I say, we waited in complete dumfoonerment. Naethin' wad ha'e surprised me—mair than the fac' that naethin' did happen. It didna seem richt that naethin' should happen. Everybody meltit awa' as soon's they could—

scared-like. Ye can tell what like it was, when even auld Tom, the gravedigger, hung back an' daurna pit his wisp o' hay doon an' begin fillin' in. . . . He was still stannin' switherin, loathlike, when I lookit roon frae the yett. An' the twa laddies were still knellin' by the grave-mou' prayin' . . . As Jock Greig said to me i' the road back, "There's only twa ways to't—either Mrs. M'Taggart sud ha'e been brocht back to life there and then—or Hugh an' Alec sud ha'e been struck doon. As it is it's almost as if there wasna ony God ava'—if ye ken what I mean."

Polly (deliberately):—I'm no' sae shair that ye dae yersel', faither.

Macfarlane:—I'm no' sayin't i' ony irreverent way. . . . Jock Greig was very bitter about neither o' the meenisters attendin' the funeral juist because they waurna asked to offeeciate. Of course, ye couldna wunner at a stickler for form like auld M'Queen—but Latimer's different. He mak's oot to be sae unconventional—an' oot-an'-oot evangelical. Hoo did they ken onyway that God wadna side wi' Hugh an' Alec? What a drap that'd ha'e been to them. An' they could ha'e dune wi't. The reeligious life o' this toon's a' ga'en to wind and stour. A miracle yince in a while wad quicken the souls o' the folk. Sic patient believin' an' believin' year in an' year oot, wi' naethin' ever happenin's no' natural. Fowk believin' even on like that's nae incentive to God. Still an on God micht weel tak' a thocht. . . .

Knock at the door, and, opening it, a woman thrusts her head round the corner.

Polly:—Come awa' in, Mrs. Thomson.

Mrs. Thomson (coming forward a little in great excitement):—Na! na! I ha'ena' meenut to spare. H're heard the latest?

Polly and Jeannie (together):—No!

Macfarlane (amazed—half-rising from his chair):—Ye dinna mean . . .?

Mrs. Thomson (portentously):—Alice M'Taggart's had a veesion.

Polly:—A what?

Jeannie:—Oh, ye dinna say so! What? When?

Mrs. Thomson (with unction):—Aye! Her mither appeared to her, no' quarter o' an 'oor synce, an' said her speerit'd return to her body at fower o'clock. The news

has run like wildfire. Half the toon's up at Sleepyhillock, an' Hugh an' Alick are fair garin' the dirt flee.

Macfarlane:—Puir laddies!

Mrs. Thomson:— I'm juist on my way up mysel'. Yin nivur kens. An' maister M'Queen's had a shock, a' doon the left side. It's like a judgment.

Polly:—I wunner at ye— a wumman come to your time o' life. Ye can spare yersel' the trouble. Nocht'll happen.

Jeannie:—Ye mean ye hope nocht wull. Ye dinna ken mair than he lave o's. Faith's no' that common that God can afford to squander't, an' gie' mean wee souls than haena' the strength to hand a decent hope leave to craw owre their betters. (*Jumping up and grabbing her hat.*) Oh, I hope it's true, I hope it's true. (*Suddenly drops onto her knees.*) O God, answer this prayer. We believe we wull. Fulfill the veesion. Gi'e back this mither to her sons an' dochter. Amen!

Macfarlane:—Amen!

Exit Mrs. Thomson and Jean.

Macfarlane (squirming under Polly's look):—It's bound to happen some day—an' as weel the day as ony ither . . .

Polly (unrolling a bundle of knitting wool and passing a cut to her father):—You'll mebbe gie's a haun' wi' this i' the meantime.

Macfarlane puts the cut round his wrists and Polly begins briskly winding it into a ball.

§ 3. Sketch — Lewis Grassic Gibbon

GLASGOW

Glasgow is one of the few places in Scotland which defy personification. To image Edinburgh as a disappointed spinster, with a hare-lip and inhibitions, is at least to approximate as closely to the truth as to image the Prime Mover as a Levantine Semite. So with Dundee, a frowsy fisher-wife addicted to gin and infanticide, Aberdeen a thin-lipped peasant-woman who has borne eleven and buried nine. But no Scottish image of personification may display, even distortedly, the essential Glasgow. One might go further afield, to the tortured imaginings of the

Asiatic mind, to find her likeness—many-armed Siva with the waistlet of skulls, or Xipe of Ancient America, whose priest skinned the victim alive, and then clad himself in the victim's skin. . . . But one doubts anthropomorphic representation at all. The monster of Loch Ness is probably the lost soul of Glasgow, in scales and horns, disporting itself in the Highlands after evacuating finally and completely its mother-corpse.

One cannot blame it. My distant cousin, Mr. Leslie Mitchell, once described Glasgow in one of his novels as "the vomit of a cataleptic commercialism." But it is more than that. It may be a corpse, but the maggot-swarm upon it is very fiercely alive. One cannot watch and hear the long beat of traffic down Sauchiehall, or see its eddy and spume where St. Vincent Street and Renfield Street cross, without realizing what excellent grounds the old-fashioned anthropologist appeared to have for believing that man was by nature a brutish savage, a herd-beast delighting in vocal discordance and orgiastic aural abandon.

Loch Lomond lies quite near to Glasgow. Nice Glaswegians motor out there and admire the scenery and calculate its horse-power and drink whisky and chaff one another in genteelly Anglicized Glaswegianisms. After a hasty look at Glasgow the investigator would do well to disguise himself as one of like kind, drive down to Loch Lomondside and stare across its waters at the sailing clouds that crown the Ben, at the flooding of colours changing and darkling and miraculously lighting up and down those misty slopes, where night comes over long mountain leagues that know only the paddings of the shy, stray hare, the whirr and cry of the startled pheasant, silences so deep you can hear the moon come up, mornings so greyly coloured they seem stolen from Norse myth. This is the proper land and stance from which to look at Glasgow, to divest oneself of horror or shame or admiration or—very real—fear, and ask: Why? Why did men ever allow themselves to become enslaved to a thing so obscene and so foul when there was *this* awaiting them here—hills and the splendours of freedom and silence, the clean splendours of hunger and woe and dread in the winds and rains and famine-times of the earth, hunting and love and the call of the moon? Nothing endured by the primitives who once roamed those hills—nothing of woe or terror—approxi-

mated in degree or kind to that life that festers in the courts and wynds and alleys of Camlachie, Govan, the Gorbals.

In Glasgow there are over a hundred and fifty thousand human beings living in such conditions as the most bitterly pressed primitive in Tierra del Fuego never visioned. They live five or six to the single room. . . . And at this point, sitting and staring at Ben Lomond, it requires a vivid mental jerk to realize the quality of that room. It is not a room in a large and airy building; it is not a single-roomed hut on the verge of a hill; it is not a cave driven into free rock, in the sound of the sea-birds, as that old Azilian cave in Argyll: it is a room that is part of some great sloven of tenement—the tenement itself in a line or a grouping with hundreds of its fellows, its windows grimed with the unceasing wash and drift of coal-dust, its stairs narrow and befouled and steep, its evening breath like that which might issue from the mouth of a lung-diseased beast. The hundred and fifty thousand eat and sleep and copulate and conceive and crawl into childhood in those waste jungles of stench and disease and hopelessness, sub-humans as definitely as the Morlocks of Wells—and without even the consolation of feeding on their oppressors' flesh.

A hundred and fifty thousand . . . and all very like you or me or my investigator sitting appalled on the banks of Loch Lomond (where he and his true love will never meet again). And they live on food of the quality of offal, ill-cooked, ill-eaten with speedily-diseased teeth for the tending of which they can afford no fees; they work—if they have work—in factories or foundries or the roaring reek of the Docks toilsome and dreary and unimaginative hours—hour on hour, day on day, frittering away the tissues of their bodies and the spirit-stuff of their souls; they are workless—great numbers of them—doomed to long days of staring vacuity, of shoelessness, of shivering hidings in this and that mean runway when the landlords' agents come, of mean and desperate beggings at Labour Exchanges and Public Assistance Committees; their voices are the voices of men and women robbed of manhood and womanhood. . . .

The investigator on Loch Lomondside shudders and turns to culture for comfort. He is, of course, a subscriber to *The Modern Scot,* where culture at three removes—castrated, disembowelled, and genteelly vulgarized—is

served afresh each season; and has brought his copy with him. Mr. Adam Kennedy is serializing a novel, *The Mourners,* his technique a genteel objectivity. And one of his characters has stopped in Glasgow's Kelvingrove, and is savouring its essence:

"John's eyes savoured the spaciousness of the crescent, the formal curve of the unbroken line of house façades, the regimentation of the rows of chimney-pots, the full-length windows, the unnecessarily broad front steps, the feudal basements—savoured all these in the shimmering heat of the day just as his nose had savoured the morning freshness. It was as good for him to walk round these old terraces as to visit a cathedral. He could imagine now and then that he had evoked for himself something of the atmosphere of the grand days of these streets. The world was sure of itself then, sure of the ultimate perfectability of man, sure of the ultimate mastery over the forces that surrounded him. And if Atlas then no longer had the world firm on his shoulder, the world for all that rested on the same basis of the thus-and-thusness of things. With such a basis you could have that sureness of yourself to do things largely as had been done before. But the modern mind was no longer sure of itself even in a four-roomed bungalow. Its pride was the splitting of its personality into broods of impish devils that spent their time spying one on the other. It could never get properly outside itself, could never achieve the objectivity that was capable of such grandly deliberate planning as in these streets."

Glasgow speaks. The hundred and fifty thousand are answered. Glasgow has spoken.

This, indeed, is its attitude, not merely the pale whey of intellectualism peculiar to *The Modern Scot.* The bourgeois Glaswegian cultivates æsthetic objectivity as happier men cultivate beards or gardens. Pleasant folk of Kelvingrove point out that those hundred and fifty thousand—how well off they are! Free education, low rents, no rates, State relief—half of them, in fact, State pensioners. Besides, they enjoy life as they are—damn them, or they ought to. Always raising riots about their conditions. Not that they raise the riots themselves—it's the work of the communists—paid agitators from Moscow. But they've long since lost all hold. Or they ought to have——

In those days of Nationalism, of Douglasism (that in-

genious scheme for childbirth without pain and—even more intriguing—without a child), of Socialism, of Fascism, Glasgow, as no other place, moves me to a statement of faith. I have amused myself with many political creeds —the more egregious the creed the better. I like the thought of a Scots Republic with Scots Border Guards in saffron kilts—the thought of those kilts can awake me to joy in the middle of the night. I like the thought of Miss Wendy Wood leading a Scots Expeditionary Force down to Westminster to reclaim the Scone Stone: I would certainly march with that expedition myself in spite of the risk of dying of laughter by the way. I like the thought of a Scots Catholic kingdom with Mr. Compton Mackenzie Prime Minister to some disinterred Jacobite royalty, and all the Scots intellectuals settled out on the land on thirty-acre crofts, or sent to recolonize St. Kilda for the good of their souls and the nation (except the hundreds streaming over the Border in panic flight at sight of this Scotland of their dreams). I like the thought of the ancient Scots aristocracy revived and set in order by Mr. George Blake, that ephor of the people: Mr. Blake vetoing the Duke of Montrose is one of my dearest visions. I like the thoughts of the Scottish Fascists evicting all those of Irish blood from Scotland, and so leaving Albyn entirely deserted but for some half-dozen pro-Irish Picts like myself. I like the thought of a Scottish Socialist Republic under Mr. Maxton—preferably at war with royalist England, and Mr. Maxton summoning the Russian Red Army to his aid (the Red Army digging a secret tunnel from Archangel to Aberdeen). And I like the thought of Mr. R. M. Black and his mysterious Free Scots, that modern Mafia, assassinating the Bankers (which is what bankers are for). . . .

But I cannot play with those fantasies when I think of the hundred and fifty thousand in Glasgow. They are a something that stills the parlour chatter. I find I am by way of being an intellectual myself. I meet and talk with many people whose interests are art and letters and music, enthusiasm for this and that aspect of craft and architecture, men and women who have very warm and sincere beliefs indeed regarding the ancient culture of Scotland, people to whom Glasgow is the Hunterian Museum with its fine array of Roman coins, or the Galleries with their equally fine array of pictures. "Culture" is the motif-word

of the conversation: ancient Scots culture, future Scots culture, culture ad lib. and ad nauseam. . . . The patter is as intimate on my tongue as on theirs. And relevant to the fate and being of those hundred and fifty thousand it is no more than the chatter and scratch of a band of apes, seated in a pit on a midden of corpses.

There is nothing in culture or art that is worth the life and elementary happiness of one of those thousands who rot in the Glasgow slums. There is nothing in science or religion. If it came (as it may come) to some fantastic choice between a free and independent Scotland, a centre of culture, a bright flame of artistic and scientific achievement, and providing elementary decencies of food and shelter to the submerged proletariat of Glasgow and Scotland, I at least would have no doubt as to which side of the battle I would range myself. For the cleansing of that horror, if cleanse it they could, I would welcome the English in suzerainty over Scotland till the end of time. I would welcome the end of Braid Scots and Gaelic, our culture, our history, our nationhood under the heels of a Chinese army of occupation if it could cleanse the Glasgow slums give a surety of food and play—the elementary right of every human being—to those people of the abyss. . . .

I realize (seated on the plump modernity of *The Modern Scot* by the side of my investigator out on Loch Lomond-bank) how completely I am the complete Philistine. I have always liked the Philistines, a commendable and gracious and cleanly race. They built clean cities with wide, airy streets, they delighted in the singing of good, simple songs and hunting and lovemaking and the worshipping of relevant and comprehensible Gods. They were a light in the Ancient East and led simple and happy and carefree lives, with a splendour of trumpets now and again to stir them to amusing orgy. . . . And above, in the hills, in Jerusalem, dwelt the Israelites, unwashed and unashamed, horrified at the clean anarchy which is the essence of life, oppressed by grisly fears of life and death and time, suborning simple human pleasures in living into an insane debating on justice and right, the Good Life, the Soul of Man, artistic canon, the First Cause, National Ethos, the mainsprings of conduct, æsthetic approach—and all the rest of the dirty little toys with which dirty little

men in dirty little caves love to play, turning with a haughty shudder of repulsion from the cry of the wind and the beat of the sun on the hills outside. . . . One of the greatest tragedies of the ancient world was the killing of Goliath by David—a ghoul-haunted little village squirt who sneaked up and murdered the Philistine while the latter (with a good breakfast below his belt) was admiring the sunrise.

The non-Philistines never admire sunrises. They never admire good breakfasts. Their ideal is the half-starved at sunset, whose actions and appearances they can record with a proper æsthetic detachment. One of the best-loved pictures of an earlier generation of Glasgow intellectuals was Josef Israel's *Frugal Meal* in the Glasgow Galleries. Even yet the modern will halt you to admire the chiaroscuro, the fine shades and attitudes. But you realize he is a liar. He is merely an inhibited little sadist, and his concentrated essence of enjoyment is the hunger and dirt and hopelessness of the two figures in question. He calls this a "robust acceptance of life."

Sometime, it is true, the non-Philistine of past days had a qualm of regret, a notion, a thin pale abortion of an idea that life in simplicity was life in essence. So he painted a man or a woman, nude only in the less shameful portions of his or her anatomy (egregious bushes were called in to hide the genital shames) and called it not *Walking* or *Running* or *Staring* or *Sleeping* or *Lusting* (as it generally was) but *Light* or *Realization* or *The Choir* or what not. A Millais in the Glasgow Galleries is an excellent example, which neither you nor my investigator may miss. It is the non-Philistine's wistful idea of (in capitals) Life in Simplicity—a decent young childe in a breech-clout about to play hoop-la with a forked stick. But instead of labelling this truthfully and obviously *Portrait of Shy-Making Intellectual Playing at Boy Scouts* it is called (of course) *The Forerunner.*

The bourgeois returns at evening these days to Kelvingrove, to Woodsidehill, to Hillhead and Dowanhill with heavy and doubting steps. The shipyards are still, with rusting cranes and unbefouled waters nearby, in Springburn the empty factories increase and multiply, there are dead windows and barried factory-gates in Bridgeton and Mile End. Commercialism has returned to its own vomit

too often and too long still to find sustenance therein. Determinedly in Glasgow (as elsewhere) they call this condition "The Crisis", and, in the fashion of a Christian Scientist whose actual need is cascara, invoke Optimism for its cure. But here as nowhere else in the modern world of capitalism does the impartial investigator realize that the remedy lies neither in medicine nor massage, but in surgery. . . . The doctors (he hears) are gathered for the Saturday-Sunday diagnoses on Glasgow Green; and betakes himself there accordingly.

But there (as elsewhere) the physicians disagree—multitudes of physicians, surrounded by anxious groups of the ailing patient's dependents. A brief round of the various physicians convinces the investigator of one thing: the unpopularity of surgery. The single surgeon orating is, of course, the Communist. His gathering is small. A larger following attends Mr. Guy Aldred, Non-Parliamentary Anarchocommunist, pledged to use neither knives nor pills, but invocation of the Gospels according to St. Bakunin. Orthodox Socialism, ruddy and plump, with the spoils from the latest Glasgow Corporation swindle in its pocket, the fee'd physician, popular and pawky, is fervent and optimistic. Pills?—Nonsense! Surgery?—Muscovite savagery! What is needed to remove the sprouting pustules from the fair face of commercialism is merely a light, non-greasy ointment (which will not stain the sheets). Near at hand stands the Fascist: the investigator, with a training which has hitherto led him to debar the Neanderthaler from the direct ancestral line of *Homo Sapiens*, stares at this ethnological note of interrogation. The Fascist diagnosis: Lack of blood. Remedy: Bleeding. A Nationalist holds forth near by. What the patient needs is not more food, fresh air, a decent room of his own and a decent soul of his own—No! What he needs is the air he ceased to breathe two hundred and fifty years ago—specially reclaimed and canned by the National Party of Scotland (and forwarded in plain vans.) . . . A Separatist casts scorn on the Nationalist's case. What the patient requires is: Separation. Separation from England, from English speech, English manners, English food, English clothes, English culinary art and English common sense. Then he will recover.

It is coming on dark, as they say in the Scotland that is

not Glasgow. And out of the Gorbals arises again that foul breath as of a dying beast.

You turn from the Glasgow Green with a determination to inspect this Gorbals on your own. It is incredibly un-Scottish. It is lovably and abominably and delightfully and hideously un-Scottish. It is not even a Scottish slum. Stout men in beards and ringlets and unseemly attire lounge and strut with pointed shoes: Ruth and Naomi go by with downcast Eastern faces, the Lascar rubs shoulder with the Syrian, Harry Lauder is a Baal unkeened to the midnight stars. In the air the stench is of a different quality to Govan's or Camlachie's,—a better quality. It is not filth and futility and boredom unrelieved. It is haunted by an ancient ghost of goodness and grossness, sun-warmed and ripened under alien suns. It is the most saving slum in Glasgow, and the most abandoned. Emerging from it, the investigator suddenly realizes why he sought it in such haste from Glasgow Green: it was in order that he might assure himself there were really and actually other races on the earth apart from the Scots?

So long I have wanted to write what I am about to write —but hitherto I have lacked the excuse. Glasgow provides it. . . . About Nationalism. About Small Nations. What a curse to the earth are small nations! Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Finland, San Salvador, Luxembourg, Manchukuo, the Irish Free State. There are many more: there is an appalling number of disgusting little stretches of the globe claimed, occupied and infected by groupings of babbling little morons—babbling militant on the subjects (unendingly) of their *exclusive* cultures, their *exclusive* languages, their *national* souls, their *national* genius, their unique achievements in throat-cutting in this and that abominable little squabble in the past. Mangy little curs a-yap above their minute hoardings of shrivelled bones, they cease from their yelpings at the passers-by only in such intervals as they devote to civil-war flea-hunts. Of all the accursed progeny of World War, surely the worst was this dwarf mongrel-litter. The South Irish of the middle class were never pleasant persons: since they obtained their Free State the belch of their pride in the accents of their unhygienic patois has given the unfortunate Irish Channel the seeming of a cess-pool. Having blamed their misfortunes on England for centuries, they achieved independ-

ence and promptly found themselves incapable of securing that independence by the obvious and necessary operation —social revolution. Instead: revival of Gaelic, bewildering an unhappy world with uncouth spellings and titles and postage-stamps; revival of the blood feud; revival of the decayed literary cultus which (like most products of the Kelt) was an abomination even while actually alive and but poor manure when it died. . . . Or Finland— Communist-murdering Finland—ruled by German Generals and the Central European foundries, boasting to its ragged population the return of its ancient literary culture like a senile octogenarian boasting the coming of second childhood. . . . And we are bidden go and do likewise:

"For we are not opposed to English influence only at those points where it expresses itself in political domination and financial and economic over-control, but we are (or ought to be) opposed to English influence at all points. Not only must English governmental control be overthrown, but the English language must go, and English methods of education, English fashions in dress, English models in the arts, English ideals, everything English. Everything English must go."

This is a Mr. Ludovic Grant, writing in *The Free Man*. Note what the Scot is bidden to give up: the English language, that lovely and flexible instrument, so akin to the darker Braid Scots which has been the Scotsman's tool of thought for a thousand years. English methods of education: which are derived from Germano-French-Italian models. English fashions in dress: invented in Paris—London—Edinburgh—Timbuktu—Calcutta—Chichen-Itza—New York. English models in the arts: nude models as well, no doubt—Scots models in future must sprout three pairs of arms and a navel in the likeness of a lion rampant. English ideals: decency, freedom, justice, ideals innate in the mind of man, as common to the Bantu as to the Kentishman—those also he must relinquish. . . . It will profit Glasgow's hundred and fifty thousand slum-dwellers so much to know that they are being starved and brutalized by Labour Exchanges and Public Assistance Committees staffed exclusively by Gaelic-speaking, haggis-eating Scots in saffron kilts and tongued brogues, full of such typical Scottish ideals as those which kept men chained as slaves in the Fifeshire mines a century or so ago. . . .

Glasgow's salvation, Scotland's salvation, the world's salvation lies in neither nationalism nor internationalism, those twin halves of an idiot whole. It lies in ultimate cosmopolitanism, the earth the City of God, the Brahmaputra and Easter Island as free and familiar to the man from Govan as the Molendinar and Bute. A time will come when the self-wrought, prideful differentiations of Scotsman, Englishman, Frenchman, Spaniard will seem as ludicrous as the infantile squabblings of the Heptarchians. A time will come when nationalism, with other cultural aberrations, will have passed from the human spirit, when Man, again free and unchained, has all the earth for his footstool, sings his epics in a language moulded from the best on earth, draws his heroes, his sunrises, his valleys and his mountains from all the crinkles of our lovely planet. . . . And we are bidden to abandon this vision for the delights of an archaic ape-spite, a brosy barbarization!

I am a nationalist only in the sense that the sane Heptarchian was a Wessexman or a Mercian or what not: temporarily, opportunistically. I think the Braid Scots may yet give lovely lights and shadows not only to English but to the perfected speech of Cosmopolitan Man: so I cultivate it, for lack of that perfect speech that is yet to be. I think there's the chance that Scotland, especially in its Glasgow, in its bitter straitening of the economic struggle, may win to a freedom preparatory to, and in alignment with, that cosmopolitan freedom, long before England: so, a cosmopolitan opportunist, I am some kind of Nationalist. But I'd rather, any day, be an expatriate writing novels in Persian about the Cape of Good Hope than a member of a homogeneous literary cultus (to quote again the cant phrase of the day) prosing eternally on one plane—the insanitary reactions to death of a Kelvingrove bourgeois, or the owlish gawk (it would speedily have that seeming) of Ben Lomond through its clouds, like a walrus through a fuff of whiskers.

For this Scottish Siva herself, brandishing her many arms of smoke against the coming of the darkness, it is pleasant to remember at least one incident. On a raining night six hundred and fifty years ago a small band of men, selfless and desperate and coolly-led, tramped through the wynds to the assault of the English-garrisoned Bell o' the Brae (which is now the steep upper part of High Street).

It was a venture unsupported by priest or patrician, the intellectual or bourgeois of those days. It succeeded: and it lighted a flame of liberty throughout Scotland.

Some day the surgeon-leaders of the hundred and fifty thousand may take that tale of Bell o' the Brae for their text.

§ 4. STUDY HUGH MACDIARMID

Representative Scots (2) The Builder
MAJOR C. H. DOUGLAS

I DO not propose to give any of the particulars here concerning Major C. H. Douglas's birth, antecedents, career as a civil egnineer or subsequent missions to various countries as a witness in regard to economic issue. These, together with the long list of books which he has published since he first set out his proposals in collaboration with Mr. A. R. Orage, are to be found in *Who's Who* and other reference books. A year ago—or even six months ago—the great majority of people in Great Britain had not heard of Major Douglas's name and any knowledge of—let alone understanding of—his "New Economics" was confined to an exceedingly small percentage of the population. Now his name, together with some notion of what he stands for, is known to intelligent people everywhere and it is almost impossible to pick up a newspaper or weekly review either in Great Britain or America or the British Dominions which does not contain references to him and to his proposals. That is not altogether a good sign perhaps; it means that the powers responsible for keeping all mention of his name and discussion of his ideas out of every paper and periodical except these little-known periodicals of extremely limited circulation which existed for the specific purpose of promulgating Douglasism, for a period of some ten years have at last decided to "lift the ban." Whatever their motives may be in doing so, however, the lifting of the ban discloses this hitherto generally-unknown Scottish engineer occupying a position of altogether unusual and world-wide importance. He is disclosed as one of the few leaders in the world to-day—and the only one acting simply and solely as an individual "off his own bat," and

not vested with Government power. Although his name is only now becoming known to the masses in this and other countries, it has been known for more than a decade to all the financial and political chiefs. It is no common achievement to flutter such dovecots all over the world simultaneously, and to have associations and study circles and active propagandist journals in all the Continents. Douglasism to-day is a live issue confronting every civilized government; it is pushing its way ahead and numbering its adherents by thousands in the United States, in Australia, in Canada. Look over history; how many times do you encounter a single man building up a movement against all the strongest vested interests in the world? It is ample proof of Major Douglas's genius for leadership that he has shown an amazing power of adapting himself to all the complicated circumstances affecting the promulgation of his discovery and has stuck to his point, undeflected, "with cool understatement" despite one of the most rigorous and prolonged Press boycotts in the history of journalism and without compromising his position one iota piloted the biggest revolutionary project in the history of humanity into a foremost place in the councils of every civilized country. For that is what it is. Short-sighted opponents are still apt to declare that the two alternatives before civilization are Communism and Fascism. Neither Communism nor Fascism can last long in any modern country without a tremendous repudiation of the tendency of science to the Leisure State and a corresponding reversion to barbarism. There is no alternative to Douglasism compatible with the maintenance and furtherance of existing civilization. One of the parrot-cries of nit-wits is that Douglas is the "Einstein of economics" and that the reader must go to his books prepared to think in terms of algebraical formulæ A Scottish lady—Lilias McCrie, of Johnstone—in a recent letter to the Press, provides the best reply to this: "There are only three pages (out of 212!) in Major Douglas's *Social Credit* in which these occur, and the author always brings us right up to the door of his argument in clear English before taking the leap into a world whither only those with the necessary education can follow. The more I read these books the more admiration and respect do I feel for the imaginative insight and practical genius which brought them into being; although

I do sometimes feel a strong maternal impulse to chastise the author for being content with such a cool understatement of his case. However, if I were not so constantly reminded of the engineer's hand on the slide-rule I could not trust so much this new hope which he has given for an unhappy world."

Not only is Douglas a true Scotsman, frequenting Scotland as much as he possibly can, but his proposals afford the only technique for assuring absolute national—or absolute individual—independence, and he paid Scotland the undeserved compliment of setting forward his concrete outline for the immediate application of Douglasism in my country in the form of a Draft Plan for Scotland; the only document of the slightest political or economic consequence produced in relation to Scotland since the Arbroath Declaration of Independence. That Draft Plan for Scotland has been the storm-centre of the world's controversy on the most crucial issue confronting civilization ever since it appeared; but it has secured relatively little attention—and still less appreciation and understanding—in Scotland itself. This is the measure of our appalling provincialization, backwardness, and impotence.

When the Scottish Nationalist Movement started I immediately realized that there could be no Scottish Movement of more than petty local consequence unless it was related to some substantive manifestation of the Scottish genius which would signalize Scotland's re-emergence into the arena of world-affairs with a contribution of consequence to all humanity. It was not difficult to find that master-idea. It lay in Douglasism and it was inevitable in any sound view of Scottish history that it should do, for Scottish genius had been disproportionately embodied in engineering on the one hand and economics on the other—so much so in the latter respect that the "Aberdeen story" had become the world symbol of the Scottish character. Douglas fused and transcended these two in an unmistakable fashion; and I found that the few intelligent people associated with me in the early days of the Scottish Movement had all come to the same view. Unfortunately the majority were not to be won over and the subsequent history of the National Party of Scotland had been a progressive repudiation of "the big idea" and a relapse upon the footling anachronisms of provincial politics. The only

two organs in Scotland which have any appeal to the intelligent reader and have been associated with any of the creative development of contemporary Scotland, however —the *Modern Scot* (quarterly) and the *Free Man* (weekly) —are both Douglasite and have Major Douglas and myself and many of the leading propagandists of Douglasism among their contributors. I am perfectly convinced that within a very few years all that has appeared in any Scottish paper, except these two, on the present so-called "economic crises" and on the basic principles of the present money, political, and industrial-commercial system, will seem as pitifully ludicrous to any intelligent person as the most grotesque notions of Middle West fundamentalists in the sphere of religion. Douglasism does not entertain the myth that nothing can happen anywhere unless it happens everywhere simultaneously; and Douglasism must be applied first of all in some specific country. That country ought to have been Scotland; it would have been Scotland —it could not have helped being Scotland—if we had really had one per cent of the hardheadedness, enterprise and business nous claimed by us and generally ascribed to us. That, however, is a myth, belied by every fact in Scotland to-day; and so we have missed our great opportunity and forfeited an historic role which would have given us the honour of world-leadership in the greatest development in the history of humanity—a big enough change surely from being merely the "northernmost and most neglected county in England." The Duke of Montrose and Sir Alexander McEwen and Mr. John McCormick and all the rest of the ridiculous gang of so-called Scottish Nationalists may fiddle away as long as they like with their puerile constitution-mongering; Scotland has missed Destiny's cue once again and is condemned to a mere walking-on-part—but Scottish genius acting independently of all but a tiny minority of Scots has not been similarly remiss. Douglas will rank as the greatest of all Scotsmen and his tremendous achievement—so intimately related to all that is most vital in Scottish genius as to have been almost predictable and certainly inevitable—will, despite the defection of the vast majority of his race, have had, at least, the quick recognition and unwearied advocacy of the tiny minority of his countrymen who have any claim to be regarded as "fully alive in their own time." The

remainder resemble the occupants of a town that has been long and sorely besieged who when the siege is raised fail to recognize the fact and continue to live on rats. It remains, of course, for some other country to have the honour of first applying Douglasism. The future of Scotland will depend upon whether it can speedily evoke from the national genius that has been lying fallow so long some other master mind which will be a significant contribution, not only to the solution of Scotland's own problems, but to humanity at large. There is no sign of that so far, and until there is Scotland must continue to pay the penalty of failing to recognize a prophet in his own country by a further spell of relegation to the small change of provincial politics and parish-pump culture. In the meantime Douglasism has at long last begun to make rapid headway even in Scotland itself, and Douglas groups are to be found from one end of the country to the other. The bulk of the population, however, are still in the grotesque position of regarding Ramsay MacDonald as a great man.

The true relationship of Major Douglas to Calvinistic Scotland—the necessity of his emergence at this juncture—is reflected by himself when he says: "There probably never was a time in which disinterested legislation was so rare, just as there probably never was a device which was so effective in silencing criticism of interested legislation as this idea that self-interest on a worldly plane must necessarily be wicked. I would therefore make the suggestion, in order to add to the gaiety of nations by creating a riot at once, that the first requisite of a satisfactory governmental system is that it shall divest itself of the idea that it has a mission to improve the morals or direct the philosophy of any of its constituent citizens—Sir Walter Fletcher said: "We can find safety and progress only in proportion as we bring our methods of statecraft under the guidance of biological truth: I think that this is one of those remarks which illuminate a subject much as the skyline is illuminated upon a dark night by a flash of summer lightning. We *know* little *about ourselves, and less about our neighbour, and almost nothing at all about the nature of a healthy Society. Nor do we display any particular anxiety to increase our knowledge in these directions.* Yet there is, nowadays, none so poor that he is not prepared to produce at short notice the plans which will put every human being

in his place, within the space of a few short weeks. Preferably with the aid of a few good machine-guns. It is no less than a tragedy, that *the inductive method, for which in particular the English temperament is specially suited,* is not in itself a reliable instrument in this emergency. The physical scientist who wishes to obtain a sure foundation for the formulation of laws, begins his investigation by standardizing his reagents. Temperature would be meaningless if we had not something we call 'zero.' But in regard to the biology of the State, we are in a difficulty. We do not even know how unhealthy we are, though we have a strong suspicion that we are very sick indeed. To those, then, who are anxious to make a definite contribution to the salving of a sick world, it may not be impertinent to suggest that the natural creative forces of the universe might plausibly be expected to produce at least as good results if left alone to work themselves out through the agency of the individual, as may be expected from planning which is undertaken without any conception of the relation of the plan to the constitution and temperament of those who are affected. If all history and all observation has not been misread, there is implanted in the individual a *primary desire for freedom and security, which rightly considered are forms of the same thing.* There is no such thing as a freedom and security which is held upon terms, whether these terms are dictated by the State, by a banking system, or by a World Government. Until it can be shown that, with the resources which science has placed at his disposal, the individual is incapable of making freedom and security for himself, the multiplication of organizations whose interference he cannot avoid will only make a world catastrophe the more certain."

The phrases I have italicized regarding freedom and security represent what has all along been the keynote of the Scottish genius, while the reference to the English partiality for the inductive method shows clearly where we stand *vis-à-vis* our Southern neighbours in this crucial matter.

The policy of orthodox finance is puritanical. It is founded on distrust of men and the assumption of scarcity. It has been crystallized in the stern injunction: Work More—Consume Less, Work and Save. It satisfies the will-

to-power of a certain type of man, and its drive is towards a super-central bank of which the Bank of International Settlements is a precursor and towards a world-state in which the external preserves on men will be severe. It is an affective policy, since it is associated with a system of rewards and punishments imbedded in modern industry. It is, in a phrase, the policy of centralizing financial initiative in the hands of a very few private individuals. Or, in other hands, what we are suffering from is the maladjustment of Finance to Industry; our financial system is derived from a scarcity-obsession, whereas thanks to the Machine our industrial system holds aloft a cornucopia of Abundance.

The policy on the other hand of the heterodox finance advocated by Major Douglas has (to quote Gorham Munson) been termed "economic democracy" because by socializing credit it aims to decentralize financial initiative (to decentralize it down to the individual in fact and establish the economic independence of the individual). In the light of this policy the aim of industry is simply to supply goods to the people who want them. 'Morals' are to be removed from industry in the sense that industry is to be judged by a criterion of efficiency and not asked to provide employment or to function as an instrument of social coercion and moral governance. The values to be safeguarded in the Douglas Commonwealth are Liberty, Leisure, and Culture. The will-to-plenty of the individuals is to be given satisfaction, and *the whole business and industrial life of society relegated to a subordinate place, somewhat as in the economy of the human body many biological processes proceed automatically or semi-automatically, leaving the psychology of the human being free to develop its interests.* Systems were made for men, not men for systems, declared Major Douglas in the first chapter of his first book, and the interest of man, which is self-development, takes precedence over all systems, economic, political, and theological. A ringing statement to come from an economist!

A ringing statement to come from a Scotsman—the first since Burns whose was the first since the Arbroath declaration of independence! What are commonly regarded as the typical Scottish virtues—as, alas, ever since the Reformation and the Industrial Revolution they have certainly

been the dominant characteristics not on the contrary anti-Scottish, and almost wholly products of English domination. What is to be noted about Douglasism is not only its significance as the latest, and by far the most stupendous, manifestation of the essential genius of Scotland, but its sheer modernity, its concordance with the crucial needs of all mankind, by contrast with which all the other politico-economic and corresponding theological and social views in Scotland to-day look like material which has somehow overflowed on to the country at large from the Royal Scottish Museum. Or, perhaps it would be even truer to say from our Lunatic Asylums, for all non-Douglasites are committed to the logical but insane financial doctrine that the cure for an unsaleable surplus is more production or economy. Our fools, madmen, or sinister sadists in authority are rejoicing even as I write this that Scotland has no fewer than 1600 Saving Associations in schools, but, alas, only three or four hundred in industrial establishments. If the boy is indeed the father of the man, everything that can be done is being done to make the coming Scotland safe for universal cretinism; but perhaps the relatively small number of these organizations amongst our adults as compared with the number forced upon the helpless children under an educational system that would be involved in a terrific uproar if any teacher was found inculcating Socialist propaganda, shows that already the "gospel of thrift" is ceasing to "cut much ice." Those responsible for its further propagation ought to be corralled and confined in some remote institution where they can spend the remainder of their days impressing its beauties upon each other. They include all our "leading Scots"—even Sir Harry Lauder.

It is a poor testimonial to those who would guide Scotland's destinies for them to have to admit that they cannot understand Major Douglas's proposals—that they do not want to worry about fundamentals, but are content to appeal to that mythical figure "the man in the street" and make average newspaper-created ignorance and incompetence (and the habit of waiting for the lead to come from other countries) the foundation stone of "the new Scotland."

They are not in earnest. They have not begun to get down to the subject. All they want is what they said twenty years ago or what Gladstone said in Midlothian. They

simply want a continuance of the same old game with the same old pawns. It is monstrous that in a matter of this sort "national newspapers" should have recourse so largely to the opinions of men of a type who occupy prominent positions in every age but whom history invariably shows to have been figureheads of no real value. What have these highly-placed persons ever done or tried to do for Scotland? Can it be claimed in any quarter that their intelligence is proportionate to their influence? Isn't it part and parcel of the present disorder of civilization that *people like these* should have their opinions quoted, and that our Parliamentary system—and public life generally—should be practically insulated against real brain power and creative ability?

No form of devolution (and any form of devolution is an insult to Scotland—it is not for England to give us back "control of our domestic affairs" but for us to assert our independence and take our own course regardless of England) which brings these precious legislators back from Westminster to Scotland is worth a damn. *They will remain the same on this side of the Border as on the other.*

All the Nationalist Party's motives—and the motives of the newspapers affecting an interest in the "new Scotland" —are belated applications in Scotland of methods that have been tried and have failed or are failing elsewhere, and are therefore only an aspect of that standardization which a true nationalism must combat. The National Party ideas are drawn from English political practice; all the forms of reorganization it is proposing for Scotland have been tried elsewhere and found futile. They all hate true ideas—ideas in the dynamic, creative sense. They are too busy grinding their little axes to think. The hatred of intellectual distinction is their chief characteristic. But Scotland is not to be rehabilitated by being decked out in any other country's cast-off political or economic clothing. In minor matters, we are told, we may look after ourselves; but in the major matters—which after all condition these minor matters too—we will leave the initiative in other hands. Was ever such idiocy? It is precisely where the crucial issues develop—at the very heart of the conflict—that everything worth a rap in modern Scotland must concentrate: and the future of Scotland, and of more than Scotland, will depend upon the ability of these elements in our nation, and these elements alone, to evolve ideas and

forms of a distinctive character, substantive of our national genius, and contributive in due proportion to the development of human affairs.

And the first step to that is to recognize the significance of the fact that it is precisely this neglected, provincialized Scotland which, at the very threshold of its renaissance, has given the world in Major C. H. Douglas a son of immense genius, who has hit upon ideas which will solve civilization's most pressing problems—ideas at that which could only have been discovered by a Scotsman, related as they are to essential factors alike in the old Gaelic commonwealth and in subsequent pre-Union Scottish policy and financial practice, and overturning, as they do, the vicious "commercial Calvinism" which has been so largely responsible for Scotland's decline. In view of the vistas opened up by Major Douglas's proposals—the fact they are utterly incontrovertible and that all the incompetent and lazy can do is, not to pretend to refute them, but to moan that "they are incomprehensible"—and the obvious facts of the existing position all over the world towards the betterment of which no other proposals of the slightest value have been offered—it is farcical to ask us to think about the silly Rotary Club notions of the Scottish National Development Council and those guilty of such a derogatory view of Scotland's potentialities are condemned out of their own mouths as incapable of contributing to the Scottish Nationalist Movement in precisely the same way as the disease cannot contribute to the cure. The whole mentality —or lack of mentality—of these peope is, in fact, our problem; and the sole value of the official Nationalist "literature" and its journalistic support is to reveal that mentality again in all its ghastly complications of hoary platitude, sales promotion stuntism, inveterate prejudice, and helpless anti-intellectualism.

A handful of us must still be less concerned with a mission ship to Canada (the next should be sent to Timbuktu), tartan souvenirs, and sprigs of white heather and all the rest of the stock-in-trade of the people who believe that the more fools get together and pool their inanity the better we shall be, than with the forces which have compelled mankind

> "To build a pyramid of plenty
> And faint with hunger at its base"

§ 5.

NEWSREEL

ONCE in a leisure half-hour at a Summer School of Social Study organized by the Y.M.C.A. held near Killiecrankie, attended fifty-fifty by Scots and Americans, I saw and heard the Rev. James Barr, M.P., "let himself go" as he recited Charles Murray's "The Whistle" with inimitable gestures (and a breathlessly-running glossary for the benefit of the 'foreigners' all without losing the beat of the rhythm), and when it was ended, amid the lusty cheers and laughter of the excited large audience the amiable New Yorker sitting next me turned and exclaimed with reverent awe in his tones: "Sir, I reckon that man's the quaintest work of Almighty God."

Rev. W. H. Hamilton in *Glasgow Daily Record.*

Hundreds of men, women and children live in these damp, insanitary, unwholesome, inconvenient, rat-infested, bug-infested hovels of Greenock. Or rather they drag out miserable existences. And on the hill above the town stands a fine memorial, erected to the glory of God and to the memory of the glorious dead. With the challenge of the neglected living the inscription on this and similar memorials is a mockery. It is easy to pay lip tribute to God and the dead. The test of sincerity is actual service to the living.

Scots Observer.

It is strange to think that fifty years ago cocker spaniels did not exist, and the Kennel Club recognized only fifty breeds of dogs as compared with the present eighty.

The Weekly Scotsman.

Miss Muriel Ritson, Controller of Insurance, Department of Health for Scotland, said her greatest fear for the future lay in the fact that there were indications that the sickness and disablement claims made on approved societies in Scotland were rising. They had experienced in Scotland a rise in the claims rate which was frankly disconcerting.

Edinburgh Evening News.

"Fush," for fish, is only so pronounced by people who have come in contact with the Southerners.

Nor-West in *Glasgow Evening News.*

After having paid a visit to a number of slum tenements in Greenock, I am not in the least surprised that the infantile mortality rate of that town exceeds the rate of Glasgow, infamous throughout the world for her vile slums. In fact, the wonder to me is that any children born in Greenock's slums survive at all.

Scots Observer.

I doubt it is widely know that Edgar Allen Poe lived in Irvine some time and attended the Grammar School and the Academy there.

Frederick Niven in *Glasgow Evening News.*

Greenock, with an infantile mortality rate of 121 per 1000, has the worst record in this respect in Scotland. And, be it noted, this figure is the average for the whole of Greenock. In the slum areas of the town, the figure exceeds even Glasgow's black peak of 160 per 1000.

Scots Observer.

Anxious to extend my sphere of knowledge I ventured to ask a man standing beside me in the Murrayfield crowd what exactly was meant by a Knock-on. He was quite an ordinary man with a bowler hat; yet he did a most extraordinary thing. He seemed quite knocked over with astonishment. His mouth gaped open, and he dropped his cigarette so that I stood on it, which was a pity. His dismay gave place to utter contempt, and I could feel him looking down his little nose at me during the rest of the performance.

Scots Observer.

The City Librarian of Glasgow let fall an illuminating observation when he told the Library Association Conference that during the worst period of the depression from 1926 to the present year the issue of books from the public libraries of the six largest industrial cities of Great Britain had increased by almost 50 per cent. This is the best of all comments on the proposal, fortunately acted upon only for a very short period, to close some of Glasgow's District Libraries in the interests of "economy."

Scottish Educational Journal.

Mr. San Salvadore's exhibition of pictures in Glasgow entitled "Scotland through Italian eyes" was enough to quicken the pulse-beats of even the most enthusiastic Scot.

Scots Observer.

However laudable may have been the object of the Duke of Atholl in seeking to benefit British charities we cannot help feeling that the method he chose was mistaken. His first scheme had to be stopped because the Home Office regarded it as coming within the law against lotteries. The Duke then appealed to a million sportsmen and sportswomen to send him 10s. each to spend at his absolute discretion. It says a good deal for his personal popularity as well as for the trust imposed in him that nearly 340,000 people responded to his call, even although the result is considerably short of the total at which he aimed. It is to be hoped that the Duke will now rest content with this tribute, and will not seek to repeat the experiment.

The Scotsman.

There are now 2400 Local Savings Associations at work in Scotland, of which 1630 are in schools and 621 in industrial establishments. . . . But possibly even to-day there are people who are saving with no intelligent idea of what they are saving for. They had better fall into line with the spendthrifts and let their money circulate.

The Scotsman.

For purposes of national planning Scotland may be divided roughly into nine main districts, each of them requiring separate consideration. These are:—(1) Clyde, comprising the four counties of Lanark, Dumbarton, Renfrew and Ayr; (2) Solway; Galloway and Dumfries; (3) Tweed; the Border counties of Berwick, Roxburgh, Selkirk and Peebles; (4) Forth; the Lothians, Stirling and Clackmannan. Fife and Kinross; (5) Perth and Angus; (6) Aberdeen and Kincardine; (7) Moray, the three Moray Firth counties; (8) Highlands; mainland Inverness, Ross and Sutherland together with Caithness in the North; (9) and Argyll in the South, possibly islands, although many of the economic problems of these are shared by all northern districts generally. The fault of Scotland during the last hundred years has been her neglect of seven of these nine to the advantage of the remaining two. It is the task of the present generation to restore the balance.

Alastair Gordon in *Scots Observer.*

We cannot for the life of us see why China should be allowed to send in eggs to this country. It would do China

infinitely more good if they ate their own eggs there; it might make them more able to keep in order their near and dear neighbours, the Japs.

W. T. Ferguson, Chairman of the Galloway Creamery Company in *The Scotsman.*

The Secretary of State for Scotland concludes his memorandum on the report of the Committee of local expenditure (Scotland) which was presided over by the late Lord Lovat, by saying that he has "no doubt that he can rely on local authorities in Scotland to maintain and increase the efficiency of their services while having due regard to economy." May we say quite frankly and emphatically that the thing cannot be done. It is not possible to "maintain" still less "increase" the efficiency of their educational services on a reduced expenditure of over £1,000,000. If it were possible, then the public would be entitled to demand the heads of all educational administrators, both central and local, on a charger for gross maladministration in the past. *Scottish Educational Journal.*

The point for Scots to note is that the "drift South" is aggravating the conditions that induced it. Much that drifts away disappears entirely. North and South are obtaining altering shares of a diminishing cake. It is quite hopeless for us to expect a compensatory reflex of trade from the unnaturally congested South. We must look to ourselves and to the world at large, and rebuild our economic fabric, from the foundation up, on our own ground. *Glasgow Evening News.*

Apart from London, which specialized in things like leather, gloves, porter, gin, blacking, matches, and telegraph apparatus, and from the great hardware centre of Birmingham, a south-west extension of the Midland area, it was the North of Britain—or rather Britain between Trent and Tay—that used to be the "workshop of the world." I can remember a time when the excision of London and its dormitories and nearer watering places, would have left the South of England a depopulated territory. *Glasgow Evening News.*

SECTION THE FOURTH

§ 1. Poem — Hugh MacDiarmid

TAM O' THE WILDS AND THE MANY-FACED MYSTERY

(To William Soutar)

Tam was a common workin' man,
Or, raither, an uncommon ane;
An eident worker a' his days,
In his scanty leisure a roamin' ane.
He never wasted a penny piece
—Troth, he never had ane to waste! —
He never wasted a meenut either,
But o' ilk ane made the maist.

Early and late he did his darg
And in the wee sma' 'oors atween
Tyauved twice as hard at kittler work.
It seemed he seldom steckit his een.
Early and late he did his darg.
His nose was aye on the grindstane
He couldna been puirer; his hame was yet
In happiness faur frae the hindest ane.

For idle convenin' wi' ither folk
He never had an instant to spare;
He never saw the inside o' a pub,
Or hung aboot bletherin' in the Square,
But lang efter a'body else was in bed
And syne lang afore they waukened again
Tireless he roved alang the seashore
Or inland owre field and forest and ben.

Thinkna' he was ony unsocial chiel
—The test o' that was his wife and weans;
Their happy faces settled a' doots,
Puirest o' the puir yet rich 'yont a' means.
Tam never had a stroke o' wardly luck
But a desperate fecht frae beginnin' to end,
Yet his wife and weans were brawly content
—Their joy ony hand in his ploys to lend.

It was a' the help that he ever got.
For the feck o' folk couldna faddom at a'
A workin' man wi' a purpose in life
'Yont his work and a dram and fitba',
Or mebbies the Kirk, but what could he want
Wi' this passion for nature and science?
It was sheer presumption in a man o' his class
—Settin' human nature, in fact, at defiance!

Set him up wi' his bottles and pill-boxes,
Sea-traps and nets and a' his gear
As if he was an educated man,
When a'body kent he'd neist to nae lear!
It wasna canny that the likes o' him
Should be pokin' his neb night in night oot
Into things that teachers and ministers even
No' to speak o' the gentry kent naething aboot.

Kent naething aboot and, fegs, cared less!
—A' the urgsome vermin o' the laigh creation,
Worms, lice, and the like. Certes, the man
Had shairly nae sense o' his proper station.
As for his wife she was if onything waur
Gien' hoose-room to hotchin' rubbish like yon.
Her hoose was a weavin' zoo that gar'd
Ony decent wumman grue to think on.

What man in his sober senses 'ud set
Cases o' preserved spiders and pickled snails
Roond his cottage wa's insteed o' a picter
O' His Royal Highness the Prince o' Wales?
It shouldna be allowed. That's a' that's aboot it.
Let him think instead o' the Wrath To Come.
He'd better spend his time on his bendit knees
Lookin' to see if there's ony "white in the lum"!

The Health Authorities should pit a stop
To sicna ongauns or there 'ud be a plague.
Let the Police act! It fleggit the lieges
To ken that while they slept sic a vaig
Was reengin' aboot, whiles bidin' a' night
Like a beast in a hole in the grun' even.
What was he really da'en? Douce folk
A' thocht it was some sly poachin' or thievin'!

But the years ga'ed by and Tam keepit on
A mystery to a'body aboot'm—Nay,
A greater mystery for noo it was clear
Whatever his object it didna pay.
He wasna a penny the better for't a',
And wha'd tak' an interest in folly like that?
Naebody gie'd him credit for knowledge even
—Nae honour to the place; a human bat!

Mony an ill gruize he got lyin' oot
A' nicht in snell winds or on water-logged grun',
Gane gyte a'thegither owre his crabs and bandies,
His powets and paddocks, but wadna be done;
Aye thrang wi' black doctors that fulped in a pool
Or wasps bikes like ba's o' paper hung to a tree
—He'd been a bonny nickem frae his earliest days
And aye got the waur the aulder he'd be!

Yet strugglin' on bawbee by bawbee
His hame was bein 'yont the lave o' his kind
And his bairns like onybody else's bairns,
Weel-fed, weel-pit-on, and didna mind
The sorry esteem their faither was held in
Or the dark suspicions that clung to him still
But in a' their spare time and holidays helped
Mair boxes and bottles wi' bugs to fill.

Whiles a workmate tackled him bluntly and speired
"What's the use o't a'?—what dy'e hope to get?"
But Tam answered: "Naithing, except the joy o't,
And mair knowledge o' wheen things than ony man yet."
Syne his disadvantages were pointed oot
—Shairly it stood to reason rich and colleged men
Wi' books and apparatus galore kent mair
To stert wi' that he could ever hope to ken?

"Na', faith!" said Tam, "tho' I'm handicapped
Wi' sair lack o' siller and lear nae doot
It's naething that's in ony book yet
Or money can buy I'm maist fashed aboot.
I've strength and patience and a pair o' gleg een,
And it isna education, riches, or good birth
Advances science maist—else lang syne
A'd ha'e been learnt that's to learn on earth."

"But what pit it into your heid ava'
To trauchle wi' this?" anither speired.
Tam shook his heid: "That's no' easy kent
Aiblins the best that I can come near't
Is just wi' a proper reverence to say
The Maker o' a' things made me like this
—And muckle that maist folk think faur beneath
Their notice, certes, isna beneath His!"

"If ony man has seen onything yet
O' the beauties o' nature in land, sea, or sky,
That's only the merest minimum
O' the glories that await the open eye.
Wherever we turn the haill wurld is rife
Wi' glories o' hue and design that nae man
Has ever seen mair than the least fraction o'
And nae science has noted, or ever can."

O few kent better than Tam himsel'
Hoo muckle o' a' God's bothered to mak'
Is beneath the notice and ootwith the ken
O' maist folk and hoo little trouble they tak'
To jalouse and enjoy the riches o' Nature
—He lived in a different warld frae theirs;
The warld God made, and mak's ilka day,
—Completely ootweighin' ony human affairs.

It'd be a meagre and mean creation
Limited to the general interests o' men;
Tho' botany, ichythology, and a' the rest
Are no' for the workin' man we ken,
And for few o' the upper classes even
Except a wheen faddists o' little accoont
—God forbid owre mony like Tam should think
The usual run o' life stupid and soar abune't!

Yet maist folk bogged in clish-ma-claver,
Or, accordin' to their different degrees,
On a solid basis o' dull conventions,
In things o' kirk and State and maitters like these
Miss a million times mair o' the wonders o' life
Than Tam missed gi'en average routine the bye
Night after night up a tree wi' the birds
Or in a badger's hole or eagle's nest to lie.

Every wave o' the sea, every inch o' the land
Was fu' o' a thousand ferlies to him
That no' a'e man in a million ever sees.
Custom make's creation sae scant and dim
To the feck o' folk, used juist to this or that
And esteemin't accordingly till they canna believe
That a' in and aboot them teems an unseen world
Stranger and bonnier than ocht but God could conceive.

Tam shrank frae nocht born in fear or disgust.
Whaur maist folk scunnered he thrilled wi' delight.
Mere size he kent was naething to gang by.
God spent nae less skill on the obscurest mite
And the man that 'ud follow in the steps o' God
Maun open his hert to the haill wide world
—No' be cut off frae't in ony human rut
Till a' its glories are in vain unfurled.

"Waste your lives, fools, in needless sleep.
Nature at least is never at rest!"
And sae he kent, when to its mossy bed
The skylark flew and the swallow to its nest
And the mellow thrush its requiem ended
And the wood-pigeon settled doon for the night,
The nightjar got thrang wi' its spinnin'-wheel
And the moths flew oot for his delight.

The Oak-Egger Moth, the Green Silver-Line,
The lovely China Moth a' were his;
And his helminthology cairried him deep
Into the benmaist dens o' the forests I wis.
Weather was nae bar and mony a wild night
O' lightning and rain and wind he spent
In an auld dyke back or cup in the hills
On the wonders o' nature still intent.

The landrail craiks the haill night through
And a whilie efter sunrise still;
The coot and the waterhen get noisy whiles
In the wee sma' 'oors; a thousand cries fill
The howe o' darkness—the boom o' the snipe
The birbeck o' the muirfowl, the plover's wail,
And doon by the sea the ring-dotterel's pipe
And the plèch-plech o' the oyster-catcher never fail.

And mony a polecat, stoat, and weasel
Blew on him or hizzed as he suddenly appeared,
And whiles when he dozed in the sea-caves or woods
He was waukened—never in the least bit feart—
By something pit-pattin 'against his legs
And f'und a rat or a foumart there
Or even a badger as curious as he
To study what this could be in its lair.

Wha kent ocht o' fish alang that grey coast[1]
Save herrin' and haddock and cod and a wheen mair
That folk could eat—the only test applied?
Tam saw and studied day efter day there
The Sandsucker and the Blue-striped Wrasse,
Six kinds o' Gobies, the Saury Pike,
Yarrell's Bleny, and the Silvery Gade
(Lang lost to science), and scores o' the like.

The Bonito, the Tunny, the Sea-Perch and the Ruffe,
The Armed Bullhead, the Wolf-fish, and the Scad,
The Power Cod and the Whiting Pout,
The Twaite Shad and the Alice Shad,
The Great Forked Beard, the Torsk, the Brill,
The Glutinous Hag, the Starry Ray,
Muller's Topknot and the Unctuous Sucker,
—These, and deemless ithers cam' his way.

A cod's stomach for the smaller fry
Was aye his happiest huntin' grund
For testaceous and crustaceous rarieties
—Mony new to Scotland, or even science, he fund—
Fish lice, sea mice, Deid Men's Paps, actinias,
And algae and zoophytes yont number
Were rescued thence and ta'en in triumph
His humble wee but-and-ben to cumber.

[1] Morayshire

And lang by his ain fireside he'd sit
Studyin' an Equoreal Needle-Fish
Ane o' his lassies fund; or watchin'
An anceus or ensirus in a dish
Wi' a care that took in ilka move,
Detail, and habit o' these peerie things,
Soomin 'wi' quick motions o' their ciliate fins,
While he coonted and measured spines, rays, and rings.

He heard the corn-buntin' cry "Guid-night"
And the lark "Guid-mornin'," and kent by sight
And call-note the Osprey and the Erne
The Blue-Hawk and the Merlin and the Kite,
The Honey Buzzard and the Snowy Owl,
The Ring Ouzel, the Black Cap, the Wood Wren,
The Mealy Redpole, the Purple Heron, the Avocet,
The Gadwell, the Shoveller, and the Raven.

He loved the haill o' the countryside
And kent it as nae ither man ever kent
The coast rocks wi' the wild seas lashin' their feet,
And the myriads o' seabirds that cam' and went,
Kittywake, guillemot, razor-bill, puffin,
Whiles darkenin' the air wi' their multitudes,
Wheelin' in endless and varyin' airts
—He kent them singly in a' their moods.

Fishin'-boats shoot oot frae the rocky clefts
In which the harbours are formed—below
The Gardenstown boats and Crovie's to the right,
The fleets frae Fraserburgh eastward show,
Westward the boats frae Macduff and Banff,
Whitehills, Portsoy, Findochtie, the Buckies
—He wishes he was aboard each at ainee
Kaimin' their nets to see that his luck is!

Far owre the Moray firth the Caithness mountains
Are clearly picked oot 'gainst the evenin' sky.
The hills o' Morven and the Maiden's Pap
A' stand within the scope o' his eye,
And every slope o' hard grauwacke he kens,
The Reid Hill o' Penman, the Bin Hill o' Cullen,
The Dens o' Aberdour, Auchmeddie, and Troup
—Shairly a land nae man can be dull in!

Here's the beach where he catched the Little Stint
Efter lang pursuit, wi' excitement shakin'
Like a cock's tail on a windy day.
Here's the Balloch Hills wi' forkt lightnin' straikin'
Where he fund the rare mosses and ferns he socht
And here's Tarlair and the muckle rocks
He fell owre to get at a wheen martens aince
—He'd to thole mony fa's and unco sair knocks.

He kent the pretty snappin'-like noise
O' the Death's Heid Moth in its caterpillar state;
Like electric sparks the chrysalis squeaks,
Mair especially aboot its changin' date,
And as for the perfect insect itsel'
He kent a' the range o' its mournfu' tongue
While its muckle bricht een were believed to reflect
The Flames o' Hell frae which it had sprung.

He saw a falcon haudin' a paitrik
In its talons and calmly awaitin' its death,
—Nae expandin' o' a wing to keep balance there,
Nae lacerafin' the victim while still it had breath,
Tho' the bird's last struggle gar'd it quiver a wee,
Syne, motionless a meenut mair to be quite
Shair life was extinct, it off wi' the heid
And skinned and carved the rest as a surgeon might.

A heron stared at him wi' its bright yellow e'e
Fu' in the face as if askin' what right
He had in solitudes where the human form
Is sae seldom seen, syne slowly in his sight
Its lang neck doobled quietly doon on its breist,
Its dark and lengthened plumes shook, and it rose
Wi' a wild shreik that gliffed ilka bird and beast.

The Sandpiper screamed; the Pigeon cooed;
The Pipit cam' fleein' aboot him; frae the heather
The Moor-cock sprang on its whirring wing,
Curlews and Plovers and a' thegither
Were sairly stirred up, but Tam never moved
Till the inmates o' the glen and mountain aince mair
Disappeared whence they'd come and naething
But solemn stillness resumed its sway there.

Tam was a Scotsman o' a splendid type
O' which our puir country is near bereft.
We're a' owre weel-educated noo I doot
To ha'e ony real knowledge—or love o't—left
And as for love o' auld Scotland itself
And knowledge o't, fegs, Tam's pinkie kent
Fair mair than the fower and a hauf millions o's
Livin' the day in oor heids ha'e pent!

He kent the Crenard-star, supposed to ha' been
The maist numerous o' Ocean's inhabitants.
Noo there's only a'e kind in the Scottish seas
And that's rarely seen; and frequented the haunts
O' the Leptochinum—that green Ascidian—
And Drummond's Echiodon, and often longed
To traverse the untrodden caverns o' the deep
For the inconceivable things wi' which they thronged.

He spoke o' each cratur as if ane fell like it
Yet no' the same 'ud be washed up next tide
Or come roon the next corner. His descriptions are final.
He had the seein' eye frae which naething could hide
And nocht that cam' under his een was forgotten.
Fluently and vividly he could aye efter describe
The forms, and habits o' a' the immense
Maingie o' animals he saw—an incredible tribe!

A Scot aince as common and noo as rare
As the Crenard-star itsel' in Time's drumlie tide,
First-hand knowledge was what he aye prized
And personal observation was his constant pride,
But oor lives are sae arranged instead
That little o' the life o' the country comes
In to us noo, and even that maun recede
And leave oor haill world nocht but suburbs and slums.

A'e thing is certain—then as noo
Save wi' his ain sel' nae man should fash
Muckle wi' men at a '. Man's proper study
Is onything but Man and Tam kent weel
When folk talked o' noxious and dangerous beasts
Nane answered that description in the haill o' nature
Better than maist men—worthless and vicious
To their ain kind and to ilka ither cratur.

* * *

I had written this and I suddenly thocht
O' ane withdrawn frae the common life o' men
Shut awa' frae the warld in a sick-room for aye,
Yet livin' in what a wonderfu' world even then
—The pure world o' the spirit; less kent
To nearly a'body than Tam's interests even,
And I saw in his sangs the variety o' creation
Promise in a new airt mair than a' he was leavin'.

A Scotsman o' a faur rarer type
Than Tam o' the Wilds, and still mair needit,
Tho' still less likely than Tam's kind even
By the feck o' oor folk to be prized or heedit,
—Shair to be scorned, if heard o', for a fool
By the mindless hordes that are fitba' mad,
Or certain than better entertainment than ocht
In nature or spirit in the cinema's had!

God save me frae hasty judgment tho'
When I see infinities in twa sic opposite ways,
For there's nae kennin' what ony man in the mob
May hae' in his hert if in nae ither place,
Or deeper than thocht or conscious feelin'
In his sensuous nature and mere animal life
—Laigh or heich in the scale, however we rate it,
There's nae point less than anither wi' God's sel' rife.

O Thou inscrutable, Maker o' a' these,
Wha dealt oot endless hardship to honest Tam
And gar'd him sell his prized collections and brought him
In ruin to the grave, while ithers—no' worth a damn
I micht ha' said; at least they'd naething to show! —
Prospered aboot him; and condemns this ither to lie
Cut off frae life while morons multiply
—In what unreached world yet is your meaning to know?

§ 2 SHORT STORY LEWIS GRASSIC GIBBON

FORSAKEN

'Eloi! Eloi! lama sabachthani?'

FOR a while you could not think at all what strange toun this was you had come intil, the blash of the lights dazzled your eyes so long they'd been used to the dark, in your ears were the shammle and grind and drummle of dream-minded slopes of earth or of years, your hands moved with a weight as of lead, draggingly, anciently, so that you glowered down at them in a kind of grey startlement. And then as you sew the holes where the nails had been, the dried blood thick on the long brown palms, and minded back in a flash to that hour, keen and awful, and the slavering grins on the faces of the Roman soldiers as they drove the nails into the stinking Yid. That you minded—but now—now where had you come from that lang hame?

Right above your head some thing towered up with branching arms in the flow of the lights; and you saw that it was a cross of stone, overlaid with curlecues, strange, dreich signs, like the banners of the Roman robbers of men whom you'd preached against in Zion last night. Some Gentile city they had carried you to, you supposed, and your lips relaxed to that, thinking of the Samaritans, of the woman by the well that day whom you'd blessed—as often you'd blessed, pitifully and angrily, seeing the filth and the foolishness in folk, but the kindly glimmer of the spirit as well. Here even in this stour and stench and glare there would surely be such folk——

It was wee Johnny Tamson saw the Yid first—feuch! there the nasty creature stood, shoggling backward and forward alow Mercat Cross, Johnny kenned at once the coarse brute was drunk same as father was Friday nights when he got his money from the Broo. So he handed a hack on the shins to Pete Gordon that was keeking in at a stall near by to see if he could nick a bit orange. *There's a fortune-teller, let's gang and make faces at him!*

You were standing under the shadow of the Cross and the Friday market was gurling below, but only the two

loons had seen you as yet. You saw them come scrambling up the laired steps, one cried *Well, Yid!* and the other had a pluffer in his hand, and he winked and let up with the thing, and ping! on your cheek. But it didn't hurt, though you put up your hand to give it a dight, your hand you hardly felt on your cheek so strange it had grown, your eyen on the loon. Queer that lads had aye been like that, so in Bethlehem long syne you could mind they had been, though you yourself had never been so, staring at books, at the sky, at the wan long trail of some northing star that led the tired herdsmen home. . . .

Johnny Tamson was shoggling backward and forward two steps below where the sheeny stood, he'd fallen to a coarse-like singing now, trying to vex the foreign fortune-teller:

Yiddy-piddy,
He canna keep steady,
He stan's in an auld nichtgoon !

But Pete hadn't used his pluffer again, he felt all watery inside him, like. He cried up *Don't vex the man!* for something hurt when he looked in those eyen, terrible queer eyen, like mother's sometimes, like father's once. . . . *Stop it!* he cried to young Johnny Tamson.

Johnny Tamson pranced down the steps at that and circled round Pete like a fell raised cat. *Who're you telling to stop?* he asked, and Pete felt feared to his shackle-bone, Johnny Tamson was a bigger chap than him. So, because he was awful feared he said *You!* and bashed Johnny Tamson one in the neb, it burst into blood like a cracked ink-bottle and Johnny went stitering back and couped, backerty-gets into the stall they'd been sneaking about five minutes before, waiting a chance to nick an orange. Old Ma Cleghorn turned round at that minute just as Johnny hit the leg of the stall and down it went with a showd and a bang.

You saw the thing that happened and heard the quarrel of the loons, understood in a flash, had moved down from the steps of the Mercat Cross, but had not moved quick enough, crash went the stall, and there was the boy Pete staring appalled. As you put your hand on his shoulder he gasped, and looked round; *Oh, it's you!* and was suddenly urgent—*Come on!*

The Yid man wouldn't or he couldn't run, but came loping down the Gallowgate fine, Pete breathing and snorting through his nose and looking back at the stouring market din. Syne he looked at the mannie, and stopt, the street dark: *You'll be all right here,* he said to the mannie, *but they'd have blamed you—they aye blame Yids. Well, so long, I'm away home!*

You looked after the loon and stared round you again at the clorted house-walls of the antrin toun. And then because you went all light-headed you leaned up against the wall of the street, your hand at your eyen as the very street skellacht; till someone plucked at your sleeve. . . .

God damn and blast it, just like young Pete, coming belting against you out in the streets as you were tearing home for your tea: *Father, there's a Yid chap up in the close—with a nightgown on, he looks awful queer.—Well, I'm queer myself, I'm away for my tea.—Father, I want you to take him home with us—you're aye taking queer folk home.* . . . So here was Pa, hauled up to speak to the Yid —and a damned queer-looking felly at that, fair starving the creature was by his look.

Ay, then, Comrade!

You saw something in his face you seemed to know from far-off times, in a lowe of sea-water caught by the sun, in a garden at night when the whit owl grew quiet, that awful night in Gethsemane when you couldn't see the way clear at all, when you were only blank, dead afeared. Comrade! You knew him at once, with your hand to your head, to your heart, in greeting.

PETER!

Ay, that's my name. This young nickum here thinks you're no very well. Will you come in by for a dish of tea?

So next you were walking atween the loon and Peter down one dark street and along another and up dark twisting stairs. And at one of those twists the light from the street shone through on the staircase and through on you, and Peter gave a kind of a gasp.

God, man, where was't I kenned you afore? . . .

II

Sick of father and the tosh he piled in the room, books and papers, an undighted hand-press, wasn't room for a quean to do a hand's-turn to get into her outgoing clothes.

Mr. Redding had called that evening to Jess: *Miss Gordon, come into the office,* in she'd gone, he was fat, the creash oozed over his collar, and she'd kenned at once when he closed the door the thing he was going to do. And he'd done it, she'd laughed, it hurt, the bloody beast. But she didn't say so, he sweated and loosed her, paiching: *We'll make a night o' it, eh, my Pootsy? I'll pick you up in the car at Mercat Cross.*

Oh, damn! She found herself greeting a bit, not loud, Mother would hear her greeting like a bairn as she minded that. But what else was there for a lassie to do, if she liked bonny things and fine things to eat, and—oh, to be hapt in a fine rug in a car and get a good bed to lie on—even if it was beside that oozing creash in the dark, as it had been afore now. Mind the last time? . . . But she couldn't do anything else, she'd her job to hold on to, a lot of use to find herself sacked, on the Broo, and father with work only now and then and the rest of his time ta'en up with Bolshêviks—he'd be in the jail with it ere all was done, and where would his family be then?

She found the dress and scraped her way intilt, angrily, and heard the whisp-whisp of folk coming in at the kitchen door, wiping their feet on the bass and Mother speaking to them low. She tore the comb through her hair and opened the door and went into the parlour, not heeding them a damn. *Ma—*

You knew that face at once, the long golden throat and the wide, strange eyen and the looping up of the bright-some hair, your heart was twisted with a sudden memory, remembering her sorrow, her repentance, once, that night when she laved your feet with tears, how she followed through the stour of the suns and days of those moons when you trekked your men to El Kuds, Magdalene, the Magdalene.

She thought, Oh gosh, isn't father just awful? another tink brought into the house, a fright of a fool in an old nightgown. If Mr. Redding saw him I'd never hear the end. . . . And she looked at the Yid with a flyting eye, but feared a bit, something queer about him, as though she'd once seen him, once long back—that was daft, where could she have seen him? *Mother, where's my crocodile shoon?*

Ma was seating the Yid by the fire, poor creature, he'd

been out in ill weather enough in that silly sark-like thing that he wore. He looked sore troubled in his mind about something, the Lord kenned what, men were like that, Ma never bothered about their daft minds, and their ploys and palavers and blether of right, wrong and hate and all the rest of the dirt, they were only loons that never grew up and came back still wanting their bruises bandaged. But she thought the Yid was a fine-like stock, for all that, not like some of the creatures—feuch, how they smelt! that Peter would bring from his Bolshevist meetings.

Fegs, lassie, can you no see to the crocodiles yourself—or the alligators either, if it comes to that? Peter was in fair a good humour the night, warming his nieves, steeking and unsteeking them in front of the fire. *Your Ma's to see to the tea for me and this comrade here that young Pete met up by Mercat Cross.*

Jess banged over under the big box bed and found the crocodiles there, oh no, not cleaned, young Pete was a lazy Bulgar, Ma spoiled him, he never did a thing for his meat, there he sat glowering at that Yid, like a gowk, as though the queer creature were some kind of sweetie. . . . Oh Christ, and they've tint the blasted brushes.

She got down on her knees and raxed out the polish, and started to clean, no body speaking, Ma seeing to the smokies above the fire, Pa warming his hands and Pete just staring, the Yid—Jess looked up then and saw him look at her, she stopped and looked back with a glower of her brows and next minute felt suddenly sick and faint. . . . Oh Gosh, that couldn't have happened to her, not *that,* after that night with Redding? She'd go daft, she'd go out and drown herself if there were a kid——

You could see in this room with the wide, strange lum and those folk who only half-minded you suddenly a flash in the Magdalene's eyes. She was minding—minding you and the days when she joined the band, the New Men you led, while you preached again chastity, patience and love. The Magdalene minding, her eyes all alowe, in a minute she'd speak as Peter had spoken——

Peter said *Those smokies have fairly a right fine guff. Up with them, Ma, I've the meeting to gang to. Sit in about, Comrade, and help yourself. Queer I thought I'd once met you afore—Dottlet, folk sometimes get, eh, ay? Do you like two lumps or three in your tea?*

You heard yourself say *None, if you please,* though this was a queer and antrin stuff put into a queer and antrin drink. Yet it warmed you up as you drank it then and ate the smoked fish the woman Martha served, with a still, grave face (you minded her face in other time, before that birling of dust went past).

Pete thought as he ate up his bit of a smoky, *My Yid chap was famisht as Pa would say. Look how he's tearing into the fish. Maybe he'll help me to plane my bookcase after he's finisht.* And he called out loud, they all gave a loup, *Will you help me to plane my bookcase, chap? You were once a joiner and should do it just fine.*

The loon, you saw, knew you—or kenned only that? *How did you ken that I carpentered?*

—Och, I just kent. Will you help me? Ma, there's Will coming up the stair.

Jess got to her feet and slipped into the room, and banged the door and stood biting her lips, feared, but not now so feared as she'd been. If that was the thing that had happened to her she kenned a place where they'd see to it. Ugh, it made her shiver, that couldn't be helped, she'd see to the thing in spite of the Yid. . . . Och, she was going clean daft, she supposed, what had the Yid to do with it all? Something queer as he stared at her? If she vexed over every gowk that stared she'd be in a damn fine soss ere long. In a damn fine soss already, oh Gosh! . . .

Will thought as he stepped in and snibbed the door, Hello, another recruit for the Cause. A perfect devil for recruits, old Pa—wish to God he'd get some with some sense and go. And he sighed, fell tired, and nodded to the man that sat in the queer get-up by the table. Looked clean done in, poor devil in that fancy gown of his, some unemployed Lascar up from the Docks trying on the old fortune-telling stunt. . . .

Of him you were hardly sure at all—the thin, cool face and the burning eyes and the body that had a faint twist as it moved. And then you minded—a breathing space, an hour at night on the twilight's edge when the trees stood thin as pencil smoke, wan, against the saffron sky, in a village you rested in as a train went through, gurgling camels with loping tails, and a childe bent down from a camel back, in the light, and stared at you with hard, fierce, cool eyes. And they'd told you he was a Sanhedrin

man, Saul of Tarsus, a hater and contemner of the New Men you led.

Will, this is a comrade that young Pete found. My son's the secretary of the Communist cell. Would you be one of the Party yourself?

Will thought, Just like Pa, simple as ever. Poor devil of a Yid, of course he'll say *Ay*. . . . But instead the man looked up and stared, and seemed to think, and syne nodded, half doubtful. *All things in common for the glory of God.*

Pa said *Ay, just, that's what I tell Will. But he will not have it you can be religious at all if you're communist, I think that's daft, the two are the same. But he kens his job well enough, I'll say that. Eat up, Comrade, you're taking nothing.*

You thought back on that wild march up on El Kuds and the ancient phrases came soft on your lips as you looked at the bitter, cool face of Saul, and you heard yourself say them aloud in the room. *All things in common in the Kingdom of God, when the hearts of men are changed by light, when sin has ceased to be.*

Will thought, Queer how that delusion still lasts, queer enough in this poor, ragged devil from the Docks. Funny, too, how he said the old, empty words as though they were new and bit and pringled, not the grim, toothless tykes they are. Looked in a funny-like way when he said them, one half-believed one had seen him before. Oh, well, oh, hell, couldn't let that pass. Agitprop, even while eating a smoky!

That's been tried and found useless over long, Comrade. Waiting the change of heart, I mean. It's not the heart we want to change, but the system. Skunks with quite normal hearts can work miraculous change for the good of men. People who have themselves changed hearts are generally crucified—like Christ.

—Christ? Who is Christ?

They all glowered at him, Pete fair ashamed, it wasn't fair the poor Yid should be shown up like that. Ma turned to the fire again, Eh me, the Jew felly was unco unlearned, poor brute, with they staring eyen—and whatever had he been doing to those hands of his? Pa reddened and pushed the oat cakes over.

Help yourself, Comrade, you're eating nothing. Never mind about Jesus, he's long been dead.

Jesus? What Jesus was this of theirs, who brought that look of shame to them? Some prophet of antique time, no doubt, this man named as someone you knew had been named. . . . Saul's eyen staring with that question in them —neither the eyen of an enemy nor yet of a frere.

Who was Jesus?...

Ma thought, Well, well, and now they'll be at it. Will'll never get his smoky down at all with all this blether he's having on hand telling the poor Jew man about Jesus— Eh me, and the way he speaks, too, right bonny, though no very decent my mother'd have thought. But that was long syne, afore you met in with Peter Gordon and his queer-like notions—scandalized mother off the earth, near, they had! . . . *Will, would you have another smoky?*

—No, Ma, thank you kindly. . . . So that was the way of it, you see, this Prophet childe started with the notion that men's hearts would first need changing, to make them love one another, care for the State—he called it the Kingdom of God in his lingo. And what happened was that he himself was crucified after leading an army against Jerusalem; syne, hardly was he dead than his followers started making a god of him, quite the old kind of God, started toning down all he'd taught to make it fit in with the structure of the Roman state. They became priests and princes in the service of the temples dedicated to the dead Jesus, whom they'd made a God. . . . And, mind you, that change of heart must have happened often enough to folk when they heard of the sayings of this Jesus. Thousands and thousands changed—but there was no cohesion—no holding together, they put off the Kingdom of God till Eternity: and were tortured and murdered in Jesus' name.

You stared in the bright sharp eyes of Saul and saw now that he had no knowledge of you. Jesus?—many years ago, he had said. . . . And after that last black night, that hour when you cried to God forsaking you, mad darkness had descended again on the earth, on the faces and souls there with the old, kind smile on his face, his mind far lost in dreams. And those banners you had led up the passes against El Kuds were put away for the flaunting flag of a God—a God worshipped afar in the strange touns.

Ma cried, *Eh, mighty, the poor childe's no well. Lean back a minute; Pete open that window; Fegs you fair gave me a turn, man!*

III

Jess Gordon came out from the room all dressed, with her crocodiles on, as they tended the Yid. He opened his eyen as she stepped in the room, Gosh, what need had he to look at her like that, as though he both *kenned* and nearly grat? Well, she didn't care, not a damn, she was going out with Redding, she would tell them all that, that greasy Lascar into the bargain. *What's wrong with him, Ma?*

And now you saw she was not the Magdalene—or the Magdalene after two thousand years with the steel of a Roman sword in her heart, sharper, clearer, colder than of yore, not to be moved by glance or touch or the aura of God that you carried from those Bethlehem days as a loon. This was Magdalene from the thousands of years that drummlet and rumblet into the night since the pain tore deep in your wounded feet. . . .

Ma said, *The childe was feeling the heat, just don't vex him and don't stare at him like that, as though he had done you some ill or other. And where are you off to with your crocodiles on?*

—*To meet a chap if you want to know.* Jess dragged her eyen from those staring eyen. (Damn him, he could stare.) *Ta-ta, folk.*

Ta-ta, they called. She turned at the door. *And ta-ta YOU.* Her look was a knife.

Pa louped up as she banged the door. *What's ta'en the ill-gettèd bitch the night? Glowering that way at the Comrade here? . . . Eh, what did you say?*

You had said only *Peter!* and at that he had turned for a moment you saw loup into his eyen that love and amazement that had once been his, love and amazement for the leader, not the creed, it died away as he sat down again. And even he you saw was not the Peter of that other time, weak and leal and kind he had been, but more of the kindness now, little of the love, forsaken of the trust and uttermost belief. No thing in him now could ever touch except with a cry of despair.

Ma said, *There was nothing to fuss about. Finish your tea, you've your meeting, Pa. Pete, it's time you were off to your bèd. Say ta-ta now to the gentlemen.*

—*Och, isn't there no time for my bookcase, Ma? All right, all right, ta-ta, chap.*

The mannie looked and said *Ta-ta.* And again something came twisting in young Pete's wame. He looked back, white-faced, from the bedroom door. *Ta-ta. I—liked you awful, you ken.*

—Hear that? said Pa. *He's fair ta'en to you, Comrade. Well, I'll need t'away to the meeting, I doubt. You'll be down there, Will?*

—Ay will I, worse luck. Is the comrade coming?

You looked from the face of one to the other, the faces of Martha and Saul and Peter, and you saw, no mist now haping your eyen (that mist from past times), they'd no kinship with you. Saul with the bitter face and creed, a leader once for that army you led up the heights to El Kuds, never for that love you had led it with. Looking into his heart with that ancient power you saw the white, stainless soul that was there, but love had gone from it, faith and trust, hope even, only resolve remained. Nothing there but resolve, nothing else that survived the awful torment your name had become. . . . And you saw in the face of Martha even something that was newer or older than you—a cold and a strange and a terrible thing, a mother of men with the eyen of men, facing fear and pain without hope as did Saul, wary and cool, unbannered, unafraid. . . . You shook your head:

No. I maun gang to my hame.

They could never make up their minds what he said next, that minute when he covered his face with his hands, afore he went out of the house and their lives. Pa said it was something about some Eliot, Will said the poor Lascar devil had mumbled something or other about the Sabbath.

§ 3. SKETCH — HUGH MACDIARMID

DUNDEE

WHAT can one say of Dundee? In one of my poems I exclaimed

> " Dundee is dust ;
> And Aberdeen a shell . . ."

and one of the Dundee papers demanded to know what I meant by so "damnably elliptical" an utterance—the same paper which caught my eye some years ago with the caption "The Man who invented Sweethearts." The article under this heading was a potted biography of Dante.

Great journalism! That is typical of Dundee. It is a pity that Dante could not be brought back and compelled to live in it for a little; he would add a sensational new circle to his Inferno.

Dundee is the most appalling example in Scotland of the results of the Manchester School of Economics, the policy of *laissez faire*. It is not its nemesis, however; that (not to my mind but to the minds of all who in any way support or condone the doctrines of that infernal school) may come—it is not for nothing that Dundee is perhaps the principal stronghold of Communism in Scotland. That, together with its enormous Irish Catholic vote—officially disposed *en bloc*—are the outstanding facts of the political situation in Dundee. No; there is another. There is a press monopoly in Dundee in the hands of a very wealthy firm—or there is to all intents and purposes a press monopoly in Dundee, for after the General Strike, as a result of the insistence of the chief of that monopoly that none of his employees should belong to the Scottish Typographical Association, an opposition Socialist weekly was organized. Still, the Dundee *Courier and Advertiser* and its associated papers *The Evening Telegraph, The People's Journal, The Scots Magazine, The People's Friend,* and innumerable others have a virtual monopoly. But it is a monopoly without a shred of political influence, unless, perhaps, influence in the opposite direction to that in which it tries to exert itself. The monopoly might foam at the mouth; might conjure the populace with all the tricks at its command—but to no avail. The monopoly went frantic; but Dundee returned E. D. Morel and Edwin Scrymgeour with enormous votes, and gave Winston Churchill his *congé*. Students interested in the more bizarre manifestations of this phenomena where a population continues to take in a particular paper almost solidly and yet is not taken in by it in any vital matter should look up the files in the Dundee papers—they were not then amalgamated into one—*The Advertiser* and *The Courier* and read the amazing outbursts of the chief proprietor at the time of the General Strike. They were signed by him, and presumably written by him. It is impossible to believe that he could have utilized the services of any qualified journalist on his staff for this purpose, they were so crudely and hysterically and childishly expressed. Their tone was more like that one of the Jute Barons might have used to a

gang of Indian coolies than anything that is ordinarily addressed to a civilized community. They stand in a category quite by themselves as one of the most incredible freaks in the history of Scottish journalism. But though the customary veneer was cast aside on that occasion it is this attitude of the Jute Baron to the Indian coolies that has always been the reality in Dundee, and the majority of Dundonians know it. They know too that the present desperate plight of their chief industry is due to the employment by the Jute Barons who so long battened upon them—and whose mansions in the environs of Dundee contrast so strangely with the general slumification of most of the city—of still cheaper Indian labour; they know that Dundee shows in every direction the results of a long preponderance of miserably ill-paid and badly-conditioned female labour and that this is reflected in the poor physical and appalling public health statistics of the city; they know now that the particular phase of capitalist exploitation which was the mainstay and explanation of the sordid tragedy of Dundee has worked out to its logical conclusion and left them like rats in a trap. Dundee is a great industrial cul-de-sac—a grim monument to "man's inhumanity to man." In Glasgow the horrible slums are masked by the multifarious activities and bustle of a great city, and Glasgow, moreover, badly hit though it has been, had never "all its eggs in one basket" to the extent that Dundee had. There is nothing in Dundee to mask its utter degradation. But just as the workers remember how the monopoly used to inveigh against the Socialism to which they pinned their hopes but which, seeking to operate through Westminster, has completely failed them, they have not failed to observe that the monopoly has pursued with even more bitter and unscrupulous opposition every manifestation of the new Scottish Movement and they are drawing their conclusions accordingly. They are in an excellent position to appreciate the great advantages that have accrued to them from association with England and the Empire; they are equally able to estimate at their true value all the predictions of the supporters of orthodox economics that "the corner has been turned" and "prosperity will return." So far as they are concerned prosperity cannot return for the simple reason that they have never had it and their conditions were never much, if any, better in boom periods than during the worst of slumps. It is no use warning them of

the hazards of any experiment in self-government; they know that even at the worst they could not be much worse off under a Scottish Government than they have always been under the regime of Westminster. Many of them are hopelessly apathetic to politics; they are paralysed by a sense of impotence to register any meliorist effect at all on the ruinous course of affairs which seem to operate under an automatism insusceptible of any democratic control. But they are by no means all stricken with this fatalism which springs from a realization that the "gaff has been blown" on all orthodox politics and economics; a new spirit is developing amongst the more intelligent of them and it is not surprising that Scottish Nationalism coupled with Douglas Economics is rapidly gaining ground and has many able exponents in Dundee. To such an extent has this gone that the present writer was nominated by the Dundee students as a candidate for the Lord Rectorship of St. Andrews' University; but a different *ethos* prevails at St. Andrews itself where there are students (and many of them not working-class students) drawn from all parts of Scotland, as well as England and America.

The Dundee monopoly in its own journals stands for old-fashioned love stories, adventure stories for boys, detective yarns, and, so far as any bearing on Scottish culture is concerned, kailyard products—all hopelessly below the level of literature—and is opposed with an almost incredible violence to every attempt to raise the standard. This is, of course, an attitude in perfect keeping with their attitude to the Scottish political issue and to the whole economic issue. "The proof o' the puddin' is in the preein' o't"; and if I were compiling an anthology of the worst Scots poetry or a prose collection similar to Mencken's *Americana,* my indebtedness to what has appeared in the divers organs of the Dundee monopoly would amount to at least 50 per cent of the whole—a proportion out of all keeping to Dundee's relation to Scotland as a whole.

Some years ago there was an attempt on the part of the Scottish Protestant Churches to raise an agitation against the Irish in Scotland. Extraordinary allegations were made as to the extent of the "invasion" and the burden these Irish immigrants constituted on the Scottish community. The statistics and arguments put forward by the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland and of the United Free Church of Scotland (it was prior to their union) were

shown to be almost wholly without substance and so gravely ill-founded and misleading as to throw a devastating light on the mentality of the Scottish Churches. There are still occasional recrudescences of this agitation and attempts to embroil Scotland in sectarian warfare generally; and one of the new Scottish organizations—the Scottish Fascists—is definitely anti-Irish. So far as Dundee is concerned—and what is true of the Dundee Irish is equally true of the big Irish elements in other parts of Scotland—it is not true that there is either more crime and pauperism amongst them than there is among the non-Irish sections of the Scottish population on the same social level or that they make worse citizens in any respect whatever. Nor is it the case that any appreciable proportion of the "Irish invasion" has been of recent date. The Irish influx goes back well over 100 years, and if the majority of the Irish belong to the most poorly paid classes and engage for the most part in agricultural, rough manual, and casual labour, the reason for that is that the Scottish employers wanted cheap labour and were not willing to pay the slightly higher wages demanded by Scottish labourers, who were consequently forced to emigrate.

Dundee Art Gallery is a byword. Public money has been wasted on worthless pictures in vicious taste and atrocious pictures of ex-lord Provosts and other public men form a large part of the collection. It is noteworthy that although Dundee has long been the centre of a struggling colony of Scottish artists—men like Stewart Carmichael, Walter Grieve, David Foggie and others—they have got practically no civic encouragement which has been lavished almost entirely on fashionable artists from the South, like Philip de Lazlo. The same thing applies to the private collections of the Jute Barons and other wealthy Dundonians.

The older Dundee industries, like the Whaling industry, have come to an end; shipbuilding is in the doldrums; the Harbour is gravely affected by the opposition of the Port of London to direct shipments of overseas produce to Scottish ports instead of, as is overwhelmingly the case, to London, whence—at greatly increased cost—they are distributed overland; the failure to develop a coastwise trade is another misfortune; the making of marmalade is Dundee's one flourishing industry.

The Law Hill is crowned with a singularly unattractive

War Memorial; it is only necessary to descend into the City to realize that the sacrifice of these lives had no relevance to the interests of Dundee or of Scotland generally. If the men in question could now see the plight to which the bulk of their compatriots have been reduced, they might be disposed to fight again, in a better cause.

§ 4. Essay — Lewis Grassic Gibbon

LITERARY LIGHTS

One of the most praiseworthy—praiseworthy in its entertainment value—efforts of the critic has always been his attempt to levitate himself out of himself by the ingenuous method of hauling with great passion upon his own bootlaces. In the words of Mr. Alan Porter "The critic, before he sets down a word, must beat himself on the head and ask a hundred times, each time more bitterly and searchingly, 'And is it true? Is it true? He must analyse his judgment and make sure that it is nowhere stained or tinted with the blood of his heart. And he must search out a table of values from which he can be certain that he has left nothing unconsidered. If, after all these precautions and torments, he is unable to deliver a true judgment, then fate has been too strong for him; he was never meant to be a critic."

The present writer was assuredly never meant to be a critic. He has attempted no feats of manipulative surgery upon either his personality or his judgment. He confesses with no shame that the dicta of criticism laid down by Mr. Porter appear to him analogous to the chest-beating posturings of a righteous baboon prior to its robbing an orchard. Flippancy apart, the researches of Bekhterev and Pavlov should have disposed once and for all of such archaic beliefs as the possibility of inhibiting a reflex by incantation. Indeed, it did not require reflexological research (of which the average critic has never heard—or, if he has, imagines it has something to do with the torturing of dogs and Mr. Bernard Shaw) to dispose of this nonsense regarding 'heart' and 'head.' To commit hari-kari may be an admirable and hygienic exercise, but is an operation seldom survived by even the remoter portions of the extra-intestinal anatomy.

Far more serious doubts assail the non-professional critic

when he enters upon the study of such a subject as (reputed) Scots letters. If he enters this great library from the open air, not through an underground passage from the book-lined gloom of a study, the piles of stacked volumes are dismaying in the colour and size and plenitude. Only here and there does he recognize a name or a title; the books tower to dim ceilings, are piled in great strata, have the dust of the last few years yet gathered thickly enough upon them. How may he pass judgment? The books he has missed—the books he has never read! What relative importance have the few names and titles in his memory to the hidden values in this great library?

For, in the pressing multitudes of reputedly Scots books which pour from the presses, there may have been a new Melville, a new Typee, a Scots Joyce, a Scots Proust? Nothing impossible in any of those suppositions. The book may have appeared, it failed to be noticed (as hundreds of good books have failed to be noted), it was poorly advertised, had inadequate publicity, was overshadowed by the simultaneous publication of a great name —and moulders now its representative copies in two or three libraries while the remainder of the stock—not even "remaindered"—has returned to the printer for repulping. There is nothing to say that this has not happened very often.

Even if the critic passes a judgment with some fair knowledge of the factors—how of the unpublished books? There may be manuscripts circulating the publishers' offices that sing a new, clear splendid note in letters—sing it so loudly that no publishers' reader can abide the beat of the music in his ears. . . . This is not only possible, but very probable. It was as true of the past as it is of the present, though both gods and machines were of a different order three hundred years ago. Yet even then it is possible that poets dwarfing Shakespeare remained unpublished and unplayed for lack of suitable influences, suitable patronage; and their manuscripts, with the wisdom and delight of the shining minds that begat them, have long mouldered to dust.

The new and unknown Scots writer facing the publishing, printing world has the usual chances and mischances to face in a greater measure than his English compeer. Firstly, in almost every case, he must seek publication in London. Scots publishers are surely amongst the sorriest

things that enter hell: their publicity methods are as antique as their format, their houses are generally staffed by those who in Bengali circles would write after their names, and as their chief qualification, "failed B.A." (or slightly worse, "M.A. (St. Andrews)"). He must consign his manuscript to alien publishers and the consideration of largely alien readers.

For, however the average Scots writer believes himself Anglicized, his reaction upon the minds of the intelligent English reader (especially of the professional reader) is curiously similar to that produced by the English poems of Dr. Rabindranath Tagore. The prose—or verse—is impeccably correct, the vocabulary is rich and adequate, the English is severe, serene . . . But unfortunately it is not English. The English reader is haunted by a sense of something foreign stumbling and hesitating behind this smooth façade of adequate technique: it is as though the writer did not *write* himself, but *translated* himself.

Often the Scots writer is quite unaware of this essential foreignness in his work; more often, seeking an adequate word or phrase he hears an echo in an alien tongue that would adorn his meaning with a richness, a clarity and a conciseness impossible in orthodox English. That echo is from Braid Scots, from that variation of the Anglo-Saxon speech which was the tongue of the great Scots civilization, the tongue adopted by the basic Pictish strain in Scotland as its chief literary tool.

Further, it is still in most Scots communities (in one or other Anglicized modification), the speech of bed and board and street and plough, the speech of emotional ecstasy and emotional stress. But it is not genteel. It is to the bourgeois of Scotland coarse and low and common and loutish, a matter for laughter, well enough for hinds and the like, but for the genteel to be quoted in vocal inverted commas. It is a thing rigorously elided from their serious intercourse—not only with the English, but among themselves. It is seriously believed by such stratum of the Scots populace to be an inadequate and pitiful and blunted implement, so that Mr. Eric Linklater delivers *ex cathedra* judgment upon it as "inadequate to deal with the finer shades of emotion."

But for the truly Scots writer it remains a real and a haunting thing, even while he tries his best to forget its

existence and to write as a good Englishman. In this lies his tragedy. He has to *learn* to write in English: he is like a Chinese scholar spending the best years of his life in the mystic mazes of the pictographs, and emerging so exhausted from the travail that originality of research or experiment with his new tool is denied him. Consequently, the free and anarchistic experimentations of the progressive members of a free and homogeneous literary cultus are denied him. Nearly every Scots writer of the past writing in orthodox English has been not only incurably second-rate, but incurably behind the times. The Scots discovery of photographic realism in novel-writing, for example—I refer to *Hatter's Castle,* not the very different *House with the Green Shutters*—post-dated the great French and English realists some thirty or forty years. But to the Scot Dr. Cronin's work appeared a very new and terrifying and fascinating thing indeed ; to the English public, astounded that anything faintly savouring of accuracy, photographic or otherwise, should come out of Scotland, it was equally amazing. At such rate of progress among the Anglo-Scots one may guess that in another fifty years or so a Scots Virginia Woolf will astound the Scottish scene, a Scots James Joyce electrify it. To expect contemporary experimentation from the Anglo-Scots themselves appears equivalent to expecting a Central African savage in possession of a Birmingham kite to prove capable of inventing a helicopter.

Consciousness of this inferiority of cultural position within the English tradition is a very definite thing among the younger generation of Anglo-Scots writers of to-day. Their most characteristic organ, *The Modern Scot,* is a constant reiteration of protest. Owned and edited by one of those genial Englishmen in search of a revolution who have added to the gaiety of nations from Ireland to Uganda, *The Modern Scot* has set itself, strictly within the English tradition, to out-English the English. As one who on a lonely road doth walk with fear and dread, very conscious of the frightful fiend who close behind doth tread, it marches always a full yard ahead of extremist English opinion—casting the while an anxious backward glance. It decries the children of "naturalism" with a praiseworthy but unnatural passion, championing in their place, with a commendable care for pathology, the

idiot offspring begat on the modern literary scene in such numbers from the incestuous unions of Strindberg and Dr. Freud. It is eclectic to quite an obscure degree, is incapable of an article that does not quote either Proust or Paul Einzig, and raises an approving voice in praise of the joyous, if infantile tauromachie obsessions of Mr. Roy Campbell. Its motif-note, indeed, is literary Fascism—to the unimpassioned, if astounded, eye it would seem as if all the Fascist undergraduates of Scotland these days were hastening, in pimples and a passion for sophistication, to relieve themselves of a diarrhœtic Johnsonese in the appropriate privy of *The Modern Scot*. The entire being of the periodical, however, is rather an exhibitory, or sanitary, exercise, than a contributing factor towards authentic experimentation.

With a few exceptions presently to be noted, there is not the remotest reason why the majority of modern Scots writers should be considered Scots at all. The protagonists of the Scots literary Renaissance deny this. They hold, for example, that Norman Douglas or Compton Mackenzie, though they write in English and deal with un-Scottish themes, have nevertheless an essential Scottishness which differentiates them from the native English writer. In exactly the same manner, so had Joseph Conrad an essential Polishness. But few (except for the purpose of exchanging diplomatic courtesies) pretend that Conrad was a Polish writer, to be judged as a Pole. He wrote brilliantly and strangely and beautiful in English; so does Mr. Norman Douglas, so does Mr. Cunninghame Graham. Mention of the latter is peculiarly to the point. Mr. Graham has, I believe, a large modicum of Spanish blood in his veins, he writes much of Spanish or Spanish-American subjects, and his word-manipulation is most certainly not of the English orthodox. But we have still to hear of Spain acclaiming him one of her great essayists.

The admirable plays of Dr. James Bridie—such as *Tobias and the Angel* or the unforgettable *Jonah and the Whale*—have been hailed in Scotland as examples of modern Scots drama. They are excellent examples—but not of Scots drama. They are examples of how an Englishman, hailing from Scotshire, can write excellent plays. Mr. Edwin Muir writes poems of great loveliness; so does Mr. Roy Campbell; both are of Scots origin: ergo, great

Scots poetry. Dumas père had negro blood in his veins and wrote excellent romances in French: ergo, great negro romance.

That such a position is untenable is obvious. Modern Scotland, the Gaels included, is a nation almost entirely lacking a Scottish literary output. There are innumerable versifiers, ranging from Dr. Charles Murray downwards to Mr. W. H. Hamilton (he of the eldritch glamour); there are hardly more than two poets; and there is no novelist at all. To be oneself a provincial or an alien and to write a book in which the characters infect one's literary medium with a tincture of dialect is not to assist in the creation or continuation of a separate national literature—else Eden Philpotts proves the great, un-English soul of Dartmoor and Tennyson in *The Northern Farmer* was advocating Home Rule for Yorkshire. The chief Literary Lights which modern Scotland claims to light up the scene of her night are in reality no more than the commendable writers of the interesting English county of Scotshire.

Let us consider Mrs. Naomi Mitchison. She is the one writer of the "historical" novel in modern English who commands respect and enthusiasm. Her pages are aglow with a fine essence of apprehended light. *The Conquered* and *Black Sparta* light up the human spirit very vividly and truly. And they are in no sense Scots books though written by a Scotswoman. Their author once wrote that had she had the command of Scots speech possessed by Lewis Grassic Gibbon she would have written her Spartan books (at least) in Scots. Had she done so they would undoubtedly have been worse novels—but they *would* have been Scots books by a Scots writer, just as the worst of Finnish peasant studies *are* Finnish peasant studies, infinitesimal by the side of Dostoieffski or Tolstoi, but un-Russian in language and content.

Another writer hailed as a great Scots novelist is Mr. Neil Gunn. The acclamation is mistaken. Mr. Gunn is a brilliant novelist from Scotshire who chooses his home county as the scene of his tales. His technique is almost unique among the writers of Scotshire in its effortless efficiency: he moulds beauty in unforgettable phrases—there are things in *The Lost Glen* and *Sun Circle* comparable to the best in the imaginative literature of any school or country. He has probably scarcely yet set out on his

scaling of the heights. . . . But they are not the heights of Scots literature; they are not even the pedestrian levels. More in Gunn than in any other contemporary Anglo-Scot (with the exception, perhaps, of George Blake, in a very different category from Gunn, and the finest of the Anglo-Scots realists) the reader seems to sense the haunting foreignness in an orthodox English; he is the greatest loss to itself Scottish literature has suffered in this century. Had his language been Gaelic or Scots there is no doubt of the space or place he would have occupied in even such short study as this. Writing in orthodox English, he is merely a brilliantly unorthodox Englishman.

Once again, a writer who has been hailed as distinctively Scots, Mrs. Willa Muir. So far she has written only two novels—*Imagined Corners* and *Mrs. Ritchie*—and both show a depth and distinction, a sheer and splendidly unwomanly power which stir even the most jaded of enthusiasms. They suffer, perhaps, from the author's learnings and erudition-gatherings in the dull hag-forests of the German psychoanalysts, just as Neil Gunn's *Sun Circle* suffers from a crude and out-dated concept of history and the historical processes. But that psychoanalyst obsession is the common leprosy over all contemporary European imaginative literature, and Mrs. Muir's strength of spirit and true integrity of vision may yet transcend it. She has promise of becoming a great artist. But a great English artist. The fact that she is Scots herself and deals with Scots scenes and Scots characters is (to drive home the point ad nauseam) entirely irrelevant from the point of view of Scots literature: if she were a modern Mexican writing in Spanish and her scene was Mexico and her peasants spoke bastardized Nahuatl, would we call it a triumph of Aztec letters?

Mr. John Buchan has been called the Dean of Scots letters. Mr. Buchan writes mildly exhilarating romances in the vein of the late Rider Haggard (though without either Haggard's magnificent poetic flair or his imaginative grasp), commendable essays on a variety of topics, uninspired if competent biographies of Sir Walter Scott, the Marquis of Montrose, and the like distinguished cadaver-litter on the ancient Scottish scene. He writes it all in a competent, skilful and depressing English: when his characters talk Scots they do it in suitable inverted commas;

and such characters as do talk Scots are always the simple, the proletarian, the slightly ludicrous characters.

Mr. Buchan represents no more than the great, sound, bourgeois heart of Scotshire. He has written nothing which has the least connection with Scots literature except a few pieces of verse—if verse *has* any connection with literature. In compiling *The Northern Muse,* however, a representative anthology of Scots "Vernacular" poetry, he turned aside from other pursuits to render a real service to what might have been his native literary language. Yet even in that service he could envisage Braid Scots as being only a "vernacular," the tongue of *a home-reared slave.*

Mrs. Catherine Carswell is among the most interesting of the Anglo-Scots. Her *Life of Robert Burns* was one of the most unique and innocently mendacious studies of the subject ever attempted; her *Savage Pilgrimage* (which met such a sad fate in the teeth of the enraged Mr. Middleton Murry) contributed as little to our knowledge of D. H. Lawrence as it contributed greatly to our knowledge of its author. With such a personality and philosophy much more may be heard of Catherine Carswell: that the philosophy of her school appears a strange and repulsive one, as strange an aberration of the human spirit as history has ever known, merely adds a pathological to a genuine literary interest in her development. Scots letters represses its death-rattle to wave her on with a regretful relief.

Prior to writing *Hatter's Castle, Three Loves,* and *Grand Canary* Dr. A. J. Cronin descended five hundred colleries on tours of inspection. As a consequence he is notable for a kind of inky immensity, and an interestingly Latinized barbarization of the English language. While *Hatter's Castle* had a Scots scene its characters were gnomes from the sooty depths of the less salubrious regions of myth: though acclaimed as great and realistic portraits. In *Three Loves* Dr. Cronin showed a disposition to prove uneasy on the Scottish scene; in *Grand Canary* he escaped it entirely, taking his place (probably a permanent place) among the English writers of an order comparable to Miss Mannin or Mr. Gilbert Frankau. He is also the author of a history of aneurism.

Sir James George Frazer, a Scotsman by birth, is the author of the immense *Golden Bough,* a collection of anthropological studies. The author's methods of correla-

tion have been as crude and unregulated as his industry and the cultivation of his erudition have been immense. The confusion of savage and primitive states of culture commenced by Tylor and his school has been carried to excess in the works of Sir J. G. Frazer. From the point of view of the social historian attempting to disentangle the story of man's coming and growth upon this planet he is one of the most calamitous phenomena in modern research: he has smashed in the ruin of pre-history with a coal-hammer, collected every brick disclosed when the dust settled on the débris, and then labelled the exhibits with the assiduous industry of a literary ant. His pleasing literary style in that labelling is in orthodox English.

Mr. Eric Linklater is a lost Norseman with a disposition to go Berserk amidst the unfamiliar trappings of literary civilization. This disposition came to a head in *The Men of Ness,* a story of the vikings and their raids into the regions of stern guffawdom and unpronunciability. It is a pity that this disposition should be let loose by the author of *Juan in America,*—in the genre of Mark Twain's *Tramp Abroad,* and one of the most acute and amusing picaresque studies ever perpetrated by the literary farceur. It would be even more regrettable if Mr. Linklater hampered his genius by an uneasy adherence to a so-called Scots literary Renaissance.[1]

Miss Muriel Stuart is one of the very few great poets writing in non-experimental English. She has a comprehension and a lyric beauty almost unknown to this English day: the deep passion of her poems in *Christ at Carnival* shines the more finely in that they lack the ornate imagery of Francis Thompson. One of the most magic lines in a memory prolific in the waste amusement of collecting magic lines (as is the present writer's) is her "*A thin hail ravened against the doors of dark.*" Miss Stuart, of Scots origin, has been hailed as a great Scots poet. She is as little Scots as Dante.

Yet Miss Stuart's genius brings us at last to consideration of the two solitary lights in modern Scots Literature. They rise from men who are writers in both Scots and in English—very prolific and controversial writers, men occupied with politics and economic questions, poets in the sense that life, not editors or anthologists, demand of them

[1] This fear has been pleasingly dispelled with the publication of the excellent *Magnus Merriman.*

their poetry. But for the fact that this paper has been devoted largely to an argument that should have needed no enforcing, the work of these two would have occupied almost all the space under such heading as Literary Lights. One of these two is Hugh MacDiarmid and the other Lewis Spence.

MacDiarmid's poetry in Braid Scots came upon a world which had grown accustomed to the belief that written Scots was a vehicle for the more flat-footed sentiments of the bothy only; it came upon a world pale and jaded with the breathing and rebreathing in the same room of the same stagnant air of orthodox English. He demonstrated, richly and completely, and continues to demonstrate, the flexibility and the loveliness of that alien variation of the Anglo-Saxon speech which is Braid Scots. The first of MacDiarmid that the present writer encountered was something which still lingers in his mind (unreasonably, considering the magnificent *To Circumjack Cencrastus* or the sweeping majesty of the *Hymns to Lenin*):

" Ae weet forenicht i' the yow-trummle
I saw yon antrin thing,
A watergaw wi' its chitterin' licht
Ayont the on-ding ;
An' I thocht o' the last wild look ye gied
Afore ye dee'd !

There was nae reek i' the laverock's hoose
That nicht—an' nane i' mine ;
But I hae thocht o' that foolish licht
Ever sin' syne ;
An' I think that maybe at last I ken
What your look meant then."

This is probably, in Mr. MacDiarmid's own view, no more than light versification. But it is certainly not English versification; the prisoner behind the polished walls has escaped and engaged himself in the mouldings of a curious façade. Mr. MacDiarmid, like all great poets, has his in and out moments—some of them disastrous moments; his care to set this planet aright has laid waste some of his finest poems—but, working in that medium of Braid Scots which he calls synthetic Scots, he has brought Scots language into print again as a herald in tabard, not the cap-and-bells clown of romantic versification.

Of an entirely different order, but a genius no less

genuine, is Mr. Spence in his Scots poetry. To show the width and sweep of Braid Scots from MacDiarmid to Spence, it is necessary to quote only:

> " Time that has dinged doun castels and hie toures,
> And cast great crouns like tinsel in the fire,
> That halds his hand for palace nor for byre,
> Stand sweir at this, the oe of Venus' boures,
> Not Time himself can dwell withouten floures,
> Though aiks maun fa' the rose shall bide entire ;
> So sall this diamant of a queen's desire
> Outflourish all the stanes that Time devours."

How far these two are isolated phenomena, how far the precursors of a definite school of Scots literature is still uncertain: they have their imitators in full measure: in William Soutar the Elijah of MacDiarmid may yet have an Elisha. When, if ever, the majority of Scots poets—not versifiers—begin to use Braid Scots as a medium that dream of a Scots literary renaissance may tread the *via terrena* of fulfilment, enriching (in company with orthodox English) the literary heritage of that language of Cosmopolis towards which the whole creation moves.

An experiment of quite a different order from MacDiarmid's writing in synthetic Scots, or Spence's in deliberate excavation in the richness of the antique Scots vocabularies, may be noted here. As already stated, there is no novelist, (or, indeed prose writer,) worthy of the name who is writing in Braid Scots. The technique of Lewis Grassic Gibbon in his trilogy *A Scots Quair*—of which only Parts I and II, *Sunset Song* and *Cloud Howe*, have yet been published—is to mould the English language into the rhythms and cadences of Scots spoken speech, and to inject into the English vocabulary such minimum number of words from Braid Scots as that remodelling requires. His scene so far has been a comparatively uncrowded and simple one—the countryside and village of modern Scotland. Whether his technique is adequate to compass and express the life of an industrialized Scots town in all its complexity is yet to be demonstrated; whether his peculiar style may not become either intolerably mannered or degenerate, in the fashion of Joyce, into the unfortunate unintelligibilities of a literary second childhood, is also in question.

For the Gaels, one cannot do better than quote James

Barke, the author of *The World his Pillow* and *The Wild MacRaes,* and himself a remarkable Anglo-Gael:

"In Scotland to-day there exists no body of Gaelic culture. In the realms of imaginative literature—in fiction and drama—there is little or no original work in evidence; and what does exist is of poor quality and vitiated by a spineless sentimentality.

"In verse alone the modern Gaelic writer would seem to find a suitable medium for expression—Donald Sinclair (died recently); Duncan Johnston of Islay; John MacFadyen. MacFadyen, I believe, has it. But here too the output is small and fragmentary and, in quality, perhaps best compared to the Poet's Corner of the provincial press.

"There is no one to-day in any way approaching the stature of the great Gaelic poets: Alasdair MacMhaighistir Alasdair and Duncan Ban MacIntyre—or even Alexander MacDonald or Ewan MacColl.

"The reason for the poverty of contemporary Gaelic culture is not difficult to state.

"When the Young Pretender and his Highland forces were defeated on Culloden Moor in 1746, there followed a ruthless military occupation of the Highland. The clan system was broken up and all forms of Gaelic culture were suppressed. The ownership of partly communal land passed into the hands of a small group of private individuals. The land was soon cleared of its human population. With the exception of a few impoverished crofting communities the native Gael became subservient to the dominant land-owning class.

"First military suppression and dictatorship, then economic suppression were the cause of the decay of the Gael and his native Gaelic culture. From the field of Culloden to the first National Government economic, and consequently racial, decay has continued steadily. In the modern capitalist state the Gael finds himself an anachronism—almost an extinct species. The few of them who are articulate turn, therefore, to a hopeless backward looking, backward longing. A decayed race, lingering over-long on a decayed economic system, can produce only a decayed culture.

"The present attempts to revive this culture are necessarily doomed to failure. In its hey-day, Gaelic culture was surprisingly beautiful and vital. As part of Scotland's cultural heritage it will survive for its richness and beauty.

But a people can no more live on the glories of the past than it can survive on the memories of its last meal.

"The death rattle of Gaelic culture may be amplified by all sorts of bodies and committees. They delude themselves, however, in thinking that by so doing so they are performing an act of resurrection. . . .

"Fionn MacColla, in English, it may be noted, is far away the finest example of the Gaelic influence. In a very profound sense, his English is the finest Gaelic we have."

Sic itur ad astra.

§ 5.

NEWSREEL

THE Police Committee of Dundee Town Council has decided to convene a meeting of the principal burghs in Scotland to deal with the question of methylated spirits drinking.

The Scotsman.

While it is no doubt very distressing that good money, none too plentiful for art purposes, should within recent years have been expended in the purchase at stiff prices of (according to expert investigation) spurious pictures for the Scottish National Gallery it must not be assumed that such impositions are confined to Scotland or that other galleries are or have been exempt from the virus of the forger. My opinion of the alleged spurious £1,900 picture at the period of its acquisition was that neither in characteristics nor in force and brushwork was the work worthy of a place in the national collection, and that as a "specimen" of the supposed painter it was palsied and futile.

Robert W. Napier in *The Scotsman.*

Mr. Gibbon must surely confess the distortion to his own heart.

Rev. W. H. Hamilton in *The Scotsman.*

Our contributor holds it to be a sign of degeneracy when men of scholarship and great mental gifts stoop to such monkey-tricks with the language of Shakespeare and Milton and the other masters of our ancient tongue.

Mearns Leader.

It is a story of crofter life near Stonehaven; but it is questionable if the author, or authoress, is correct in the description of crofter girls' underclothing of that period.

Fife Herald.

The "Kailyard" writers of a generation ago gave us pictures of Scottish life at its best. The tendency to-day is to go to the other extreme, and, in dealing with rural life in particular, to gloat foully. *Kirriemuir Free Press.*

Before the appearance of the first part (of the Scottish National Dictionary) Burns clubs were circularized. Three had already taken out subscriptions. There are hundreds of Burns clubs in Scotland, England, and the British Empire, but the only answer to the appeal was from Aberdeen, which gave a donation of £1.

Greenock Telegraph.

The classicism of Renaissance Europe was a dynamic thing; neo-classicism is static. To be Scottish was at one time to enjoy the freedom of a Dunbar or an Urquhart, whereas to be Scottish to-day, in the fashion of some Little-Scotlanders, is to paint in this way but—horrors!—not in that, to write music with a "Scottish snap" and leave Stravinsky and his contemporaries out of mind, to imitate Burns but on no account Gerald Manley Hopkins. Such Nationalism is deplorable. *The Modern Scot.*

The unredeemed close-packed filth, meanness, spite, brutality, lying squalor and stupidity wearies us.

Book review in *Paisley Express.*

In Scotland no one buys a book who can beg, borrow or steal it. Yet a golf club or a bottle of whisky, costing twice as much, is purchased without a murmur.

Lewis Spence in *Scots Observer.*

A crowd of young novelists, sedulous apes of Zola in manner, professing to be a cloud of witnesses, agree in representing Scotland as the vilest land in Christendom. Each vies with his fellow in vilifying the village or strath or town over which he has cast the ordure of his shoe. Scotland is shown as vicious as Sodom. Glasgow is even as Gormorrah. Do not their names begin with the same letter? Stewart A. Robertson in *The Glasgow Herald.*

Mods have now reached the farcical stage and it is evident to a close observer that An Comunn is on its last legs. What has the much-belauded Dr. Ross done to avert its ruin or restore the national tongue? What scheme has he produced, what books for learners? Motionless he sits, in Sphinx-like silence, profoundly meditating, but so far he hasn't yet produced even the proverbial mouse.

Correspondent in *The Scots Independent.*

It is one of the testimonials to the love of learning of the Scots that there are still young people willing to suffer the agony of lectures by the inarticulate and inaudible, though erudite, occupants of university chairs.

Rosslyn Mitchell in *The Scottish Educational Journal.*

Someone discovered that Eric Linklater was to talk over the wireless about Modern Scottish Writers; and was so surprised at this that he wrote to the "From Our Readers" column to see if anyone could tell him whether there really is any modern Scottish poetry. People wrote in answer and assured him that there actually is such a thing; and others have since written to say that there is not. It is all very illuminating. *The Scots Observer.*

Mr. Victor MacClure, the novelist, was very well known by name, to the man in the street in London; or, more correctly, to the man in the teashop. He used to write interesting and helpful little essays which appeared on the back of the menus of the greatest catering firm in the world. He is a member of a well-known Glasgow family, and if he cares to set his mind to it might turn out a masterpiece of Glasgow life. *The Scots Observer.*

There is no particular reason why we should worry about the decay of the newspaper. The amount of news the ordinary intelligent person requires is surprisingly small, as anyone in the holiday months can test for himself. The daily newspaper is a habit; it is not a necessity. One can holiday in one of the remoter islands of Scotland and go for weeks without a newspaper, and yet return to the work-a-day world without any sense of break. And even in the working days the wireless news bulletins, and a glance at a news summary of a responsible newspaper is as far as most of us need to go, and the judicious seldom go further.

Scottish Educational Journal.

SECTION THE FIFTH

§ 1. Short Story — Lewis Grassic Gibbon

SIM

What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? Ecclesiastes i., 4.

Sim Wilson came of a fell queer stock, his mother a spinner at the Segget Mills, his father a soldier killed by the Boers. When news of that killing came up to Segget the wife just laughed—*Worse folk than the Boers!*—and went on with the tink-like life that she led. In time that fair grew a scandal in Segget, a body wasn't safe to let her man out of her sight for a minute in case he met in with that Wilson creature and was led all agley with her coarse green glower.

Sim was no more than five years old when at last things came to a head in Segget, his mother went off on a moonlight flit with the widow Grant's son and half of her silver, folk wondered which of the two would last longest. Young Sim was left in an emptied house till his auntie that bade in a house by Drumlithie took pity on the loon and had him down there. She came all a-fuss and a-pant with pity, the aunty, a meikle big creash of a woman, and she said to Sim *You're my dawtie now.* And Sim said *Maybe—if you'll leave me a-be.*

Faith, that was his only care from the first, as sweir a nickum as you'd meet, folk said, sweir at the school as he was at his home, it was fair a disease with the ill-gettèd loon. And an impudent creature he was, forbye, with his glinting black hair and his glinting green eyes, he'd truant from school more often than not and be off in the summer to sleep in the sun under the lithe of a whin or a stook. And once, he was then about ten years old, his auntie

came on him high on the brae, in the heat, his chin in his hands as he keeked down through the veils of broom at the teams steaming at work in the parks below. She cried, *You coarse brute, why aren't you at school? Aren't you fair black affronted to lie there and stink?*

Well, Sim just sneered, not feared a wee bit. *No, I'm not. I was watching those fools in that park. You won't find me sossing and chaving like that when I'm a man with a fee of my own. The dafties—not to take a bit rest! . . . Lessons? Away, do you think I am soft?*

And he stuck out his tongue and slipped under her arm, his auntie near greeting with rage as he ran. But she couldn't catch up, loaded down with her creash. Sim was soon out of sight on his way up the hill. He spent the whole day lying flat on his back, the only sweir soul in the hash of the Howe.

Folk said that he'd come to an ill-like end, his sweirty would eat to his bones and they'd rot. But then, near the middle of his thirteenth year, he heard the news in his class at the school that the prize for dux that year was a pound; and all of a jiffy he started to work, like mad, near blinded himself of a night with reading and writing and learning his lessons, the hills hardly saw him except back of a book. And he'd cleverness in him, sweir though he'd been, he was dux for that year, and the dominie delighted.

He said to the loon *You'll do even better,* but Sim just sneered in his impudent way. *I'm finished with chaving at lessons and dirt. I've tried, and I know that they're not worth the sweat.* The dominie was fair took aback to hear that, *You'll gang a hard gait through the world, I fear.* And Sim said *Maybe; but I'll gang it myself. And I'll know what I'm getting ere I gang it at all.*

He fee'd his first fee at Upperhill in Kinraddie. Big-boned he had grown and supple and swack, but as sweir as ever and an ill-liked brute. He'd sneer at his elders and betters in the bothy. *What, work my guts out for that red-headed rat? Whatever for, can you tell me that? Show me a thing that is worth my trauchle, and I'll work you all off the face of the earth!*

The foreman there was a canny-like childe, and the only one that could bear with Sim. They both stayed on for a four-five years, Sim sweir as ever, with his glinting, green eyes, he'd a bigger power for lazing around than a

pig in a ree was the speak of the bothy. And young and buirdly, well-happed like a hog, he'd doze through the work of the Upperhill parks, good-natured enough were he letten alone. But sometimes he'd stop from making his brose, of a night, when the bothy was lit by the fire. *And to think that the morn we'll be doing the same!* The billies in the bothy would maybe say *What?* and he'd say *Why, making more brose to eat! And the night after that and the night after that. And we'll get up the morn and slave and chave for that red-headed rat—and go to our beds and get up again. Whatever for, can you tell me that?*

And the brute in one of those unco-like moods would go off on a jaunting down to Segget; and take a dram or so in the Arms; and look round about for a spinner to spite. And if there were such Sim would swagger up to him *Ay, man, you've a look on your face I don't like. And I don't much like your face the look's on.* The spinner would maybe look Sim up and down, with a sneer, and call him a clod-hopping clown, and Sim would take him a bash in the face, and next minute the spinners would pile in on Sim; and when he got back to Upperhill bothy he'd look as though he'd been fed through the teeth of a mill. But he'd say as he got in his bed *That was fine. Man, I fairly stirred up that dirt down in Segget!* And next day he'd be sleepy and sweir as before.

Syne he met with Kate Duthie at a dance down in Segget, she was narrow and red-haired, with a pointed chin and hard grey eyes you could strike a spunk on, a quean that worked as maid at the Manse. Well, Sim took a look at her, she one at him; and he fair went daft that minute about her. He waited till that dance was over and said *Can I have the next?* and Kate Duthie said, *Maybe. Who might you be?* And Sim Wilson told her, and Kate gave a laugh, *Oh, only a ploughman.*

As the Upperhill lads walked back that night in a bunch from the dance they had been to in Segget Sim told them the speak of the grey-eyed quean. The foreman said, *And who might she think that she is? A joskin's as good as any damned maid.* Sim shook his head, *Most, maybe; not her. Faith, man, but she's bonny, and I wish that I had her.*

Well, that was only the beginning of the stir, his sweirty went like a mist in June, he was out nearly every bit night

after that, down at the Manse or hanging round Segget. Kate sometimes saw him and sometimes she didn't, she kept as cool as a clayed-up coulter. At last it came to a night Sim said *I'm thinking of marrying;* Kate Duthie said, *Oh; well, I wish you joy.* And Sim said *Ay, I'll get that fine—if you'll come and provide it.*

Kate laughed in his face and told him plain she wasn't cut out for a ploughman's wife to drag through her days in a cottar house. Sim said there would maybe be no need to cottar, though he'd never thought of the thing before, he spent every meck he ever had made on drink and coarse queans, any coarseness at all that didn't trouble his sweirty too much. But now with the grey-eyed quean in his arms he felt as he'd done that time when a loon and he made up his mind he would win the school prize. *I'll get a bit place of my own. You'll wait?*

Kate shrugged and said *Maybe, you'll have to risk that.* Sim held her and looked at her, suddenly cuddled her, daft and tight till she nearly screamed, just for a minute, and syne finished with that. *You needn't be feared, I'll wait for my turn. That's just a taste of what I'll yet take. What about a kiss?* And she gave him one, cold, like a peck, but he thought it fine, and lapped it in and put her away and went swinging away home the Kinraddie road; you could bear him nearly a mile from the bothy singing as he climbed up the road in the dark.

Well, God! there fair was a change in him then. It was brose and then brose and syne brose to his meat. The other billies in the bothy would laugh and mock at Sim and cry *What's it all for?* But Sim didn't heed, he saved every penny, he worked extra work, and afore two years, what with saving and scraping, he'd enough silver saved for the rent of Haughgreen.

It lies low down by the Segget burn. The clay of the Mearns has thickened down there till in a dry season a man might well think he stood in the yard of a milk-jar potter, the drills just hillocks and slivers of clay. Its rent was low in spite of its size, the most of the biggings just held together, disheartened-like, as though waiting the time to fall in a rickle on somebody's head. But Sim gave a swagger *I'll manage them fine,* the daft-like gaze on his queer green eyes; and was off every night from the Upperhill bothy, not down as afore to Kate Duthie in Segget, but down to

Haughgreen with a saw and an axe, pliers and planes, and the Lord knows what. In the last week afore he was due to move in the Upperhill foreman went down for a look, and he found Haughgreen all shored-up and trig, the house all new papered, with furniture in it, the stable fit to take horses again, the stalls in the byre set well for nout —he'd worked like a nigger had that sweir brute, Sim.

The foreman said 'twas a miracle, just; he was glad that Sim had wakened at last. Sim gave him a clap that near couped him at that. *Ay, man, and for why? Because I'll soon have the best quean in the Howe. What think you of that? In my house and my bed!*

That night he tramped to his quean down in Segget, and knocked at the kitchen door of the Manse, and Kate came to it and said *Oh, it's you?* And Sim said *Ay,* with his eyes fit to eat her, *You mind what I asked you near two years back?*

Kate said *What was that?* She thought little of him and knew nothing of his slaving to save for Haughgreen. But he started to tell her, as he stood in the door, that he was a farmer, with a farm of his own, and ready to take her there when she liked.

She gaped and said *Sim, it's not true, is it now?* And he said *Ay, it is.* And she fair seemed to thaw, and speired him up hill and down dale all about it, Sim standing and staring at the white of her neck, white, like cream, and he felt like a cat and licked his lips with a hungry tongue.

Well, she soon said *Ay,* she needed no prigging, foreseeing herself a braw farmer's wife. At the end of the term the two of them married, Sim looked that day as though wedding an angel, not just a quean with a warm, white skin and close grey eyes and a mouth like a mule. Not but that the creature had smiles for the hour and was awful kind to the ploughmen that came. She danced with the foreman and said *You're a joskin? Maybe my husband will give you a fee?* And the foreman spat, *Well, would he now, then? But you see I'm particular-like about the mistress.*

She would try to put Sim against him for that, the foreman knew, and keeked over at Sim; and he saw his eyes as they fixed on Kate, hungry and daft, more a glare than a glower. And he suddenly minded Sim back in the bothy in the days before he had met with this quean, and that speak of his, *Trauchle the day just to trauchle the morn! But*

show me a thing that is worth my chave and I'll work you all off the face of the earth!

Well, he'd gotten the thing, good luck go with him, the foreman thought as he tramped away home up through the grey of the morning mists with the bothy lightless and grey in the dawn, leaving Sim with his hard-eyed quean; you hoped he'd not eat her, that's what he'd looked like.

But faith! she survived, fair the kind to do that. Folk gave a bit laugh at the news from Haughgreen, and shook their heads when they heard that Sim no sooner married was as sweir as before, taking life cool as ever he had done in spite of the nagging and prigging of Kate. The ploughing was on; but Sim Wilson's was not, the parks were lucky did they see him by nine, instead of six, when other childes yoked. Even then he'd do little but stand up and gant or wheeber out loud as he sat on a gate.

Now and then a body would cry to him *Ay, you're ploughing's far back for the season, is't not?* and he'd say, *Damn the doubt. What o't though it is?* And he'd whistle and stare at the clouds in the Howe, his cat-like eyes a-blink in the sun.

The foreman at last took a taik in about and Sim was as pleased to see him as though he wasn't new-married, new-buried instead. Kate snapped from the room like an ill-ta'en rat; she didn't like the foreman, he didn't like her. And he thought as he sat and waited his dram it was more than likely that she wore the breeks.

But right soon he was changing his mind about that. As they sat at their dram, him and Sim, she came back: *It's dark, and it's time you went for the kye—Gang for them yourself,* Sim said, and never turned. *You enjoy trauchle; well, enjoy some more.*

Kate's face blazed up like a fire with rage, she choked and went out and banged the door. The foreman felt a bit shamed for the quean; Damn't, you could see it wasn't so easy to be married to a sweir, queer brute like Sim; it wouldn't be long that these two together would store the kiln in Haughgreen, you knew.

There were more stammy-gastered than him at the change. For all of a sudden as the May came in Sim seemed to wake up and his sweirty went, he was out at all hours at the work of the parks, chaving like daft at his weed-choked drills. The land had lain fallow, he wasn't too late, and

afore folk had well gotten over their gape they saw Sim Wilson was having fine crops manured with the sweat of his own meikle hams. He snored no more in the lithe of a whin and he stopped from ganting by every bit gate.

The reason for that was soon plain to be seen, Kate with a bairn and the creature soon due. The Upperhill foreman met in with Sim one night as he drove from the mart at Stonehive, and the foreman cried up *Ay, man, and how are you?* Sim stopped and cried back *Oh, it's you is it, then? Fine, man, I'm aye fine; I get what I want. Have you heard of the news of what's coming to Haughgreen?*

And he told the foreman of the bairn that was coming as if half the Howe didn't know about that, his green glazed eyes all glinting and shining. You'd have thought by the way that Sim Wilson spoke 'twas the first bit bairn that had waited for birth in all the windy Howe of the Mearns. He was daft on it, as daft as he had been a wee while afore to marry its mother. And the foreman thought as he wished him luck there were some that had aye to be looking ahead, and others looked back, and it made little odds, looked you east, looked you west, you'd to work or to die.

Kate had a sore time and let every soul know, but the midwife said that the queer-like thing was the way that that meikle Sim Wilson behaved, not like most of the fathers she ever had known, and she'd known a fell few; they went into three classes—fools, poor fools, and just plain damn fools. Well, the last were mostly the fathers of first-born, they'd wabble at the knees and whiten at the gills and pay no heed to aught but the wife. Sim Wilson was different, with his unco green eyes, 'twas the bairn that took him his first minute in the room. He had it in his arms as ready as you please, and cuddled it, chuckled to it —the great silly sumph—till Kate whined out from the bed where she lay *And have you got nothing to say to me now?* And Sim Wilson said *Eh? Damn't, Kate, I'd forgotten you!*

An ill-like thing, that, to say to a wife, but that was the way the brute now behaved; there was nothing he thought on earth worth the price of daddling his bairn up and down in his arms, and swearing she'd winked, and wasn't she a topper? The Upperhill foreman came down for a look, and keeked at the creature, an ordinary bairn, like an ill-

boiled swede; but Sim sat and glowered at her, the look in his eyes he'd once turned on Kate ere she lay in his bed —*Man, but I'll make a braw life for this lass—I'll give her education and make her a lady.*

The foreman said he thought education was dirt; if ever he had bairns he'd set them to work. Sim laughed in a way that he didn't much like. *You? Maybe. I was kittled on a different day.*

So the foreman left him, fair angered at that. 'Twas nearly five years ere he saw Sim again, for he moved down the Howe and took a fresh fee and got married himself and had bairns of his own. And sometimes he'd mind of that sweir brute Sim and the speaks of his in the bothy long syne: *Well, what's it all for, all your chaving and care?* And when he'd mind that the foreman would laugh and know that most likely his stomach was wrong.

Though he didn't see Sim he heard now and then of him and his capers down at Haughgreen. Folk told that he'd turned to a slaver, just, he'd fee'd two men and near worked them to death, and himself as well, and long Kate forbye—faith, if she'd thought she did herself well marrying a farmer and setting up braw she'd got many a sore heart since her marriage-morn. Sim gave her no help, he wouldn't fee a maid, he was up and out at the blink of dawn crying his men from their beds to work. He spared neither man nor beast, did Sim; in his four-five years he'd made a fair pile. But he was as ready as ever he had been to blab what he thought, a sneer or a boast. And he'd tell any soul that would care to listen the why and the wherefore he moiled like a mole. *It's that lass of mine, Jean—faith, man, she's a topper! I'm to send her to college, away from this soss, and she'll lack for nothing that money can bring.*

And neither she did. It fair was a scandal, folk said, that plain though they ate at Haughgreen the bairn was fed on this dainty and that. Sim had bought the wee wretch the finest of beds and he'd have her aye dressed like the bairns of gentry. You'd heard afore this of folk daft on a bairn but he was surely the worst in the Howe. Folk shook their heads, he had better look out, 'twas fell unchancy to show over-plain that you thought over-much of any bit bairn.

And faith! folk weren't far wrong in their speak—the bairn didn't die, she was healthy enough, but just when it

came for the time of her schooling they seemed to wake up to the fact at Haughgreen. She was unco backward and couldn't speak well, and had funny-like ways; she would croon a bit song all the hours of the day, staring up at the hills of the Howe, not caring a fig what she ate or what wore, only caring to lie in the sun and to sleep.

Sim sent for a specialist out from Dundon and had the bit bairn taken away south and treated and tested and God knows what. That went on a six months and the cost was a ruin, a time of sore hearts and black looks at Haughgreen. And he well might have spared his time and his silver, she came back just the same—the bairn was a daftie, and the doctors said that so she'd remain a bairn of three all the years of her life.

Folk thought it awful, but they gave a bit snicker: *Ay, what will that fool at the Haugh say now?* Well, he went in a kind of daze for weeks, but his work didn't slacken as the foreman had thought—when he heard of the thing he had minded long back how Sim had behaved when he married his Kate and found that angel of common enough clay. But slaving was deep in his bones by now and he couldn't well stop though he wished, you supposed. The foreman met him one day at a roup, sneering and boasting as loudly as ever. But there was a look in the queer green eyes as though he were watching for something he'd tint.

He made no mention of the daftie, Jean, that had answered his question *What's it all for?* Sun, wind, and the batter of rain in his face—well, he'd settle now as others had done, and take it all for the riddle it was, not a race to be run with a prize at the end.

Then the news got about and you knew in a blink why he'd acted so calm with his firstborn, Jean. His wife had brought another bit bairn in the world, a lassie as well, and fine and strong. And soon's it was born Sim Wilson was crying *Is it right in the head, is it right in the head?* The doctor knew neither one way nor the other, but he said *Ay, it's fine,* to quieten the fool.

Sim doted on Jess from the day of her birth, promising her all as he'd done with Jean—Jean that now he could hardly thole to look on, any more than on Kate, his wife, thin and old. She'd fair withered up had the thin-flanked Kate, except her bit tongue, it could scoriate your skin. But it didn't vex Sim with his daughter Jess, he would

stride in the kitchen when he loosened at night: *Where's ma wee quean?* and Jess would cry *Here!* Bonny and trig, like a princess dressed, nothing soft about her like that thing in the corner, hunched up and crooning, aye halfway in sleep. She was celver and bright and a favourite at college, Jess, and Sim swore she should have what she liked, she never need soss with the land and its pleiter, she would marry no joskin, a lady she'd be.

He bled the red clay of Haughgreen near to white to wring silver from it for Jess and her life, to send her to college and give her brave clothes. Fegs, he was fair a long gait from the days when he'd mock at the land—*Ay, come and get ME—get me if you can—I'm not such a fool!*

The foreman had clean forgot him for years, Sim Wilson the sweir and the fairlies he chased; and when next he did hear he could hardly believe one thing in the tale that came swift up the Howe. That thing was the age of the daughter, Jess. *Why, the lassie is only a bairn* he said. But the childe that stopped to pass him the tale said *Faith, no, man, eighteen if a day. Ay, a real coarse quean, and you cannot but laugh at the nasty whack it is in the mouth for that meikle fool that farms Haughgreen!*

There was nothing unco in the tale when told, the kind of thing had been known to the world since the coming of men—and afore that, no doubt, else all the ill pleiter would have never begun. But for that to happen to the dawtie of Sim! —Jess, the student, so haughty and neat, the maid that had led his question so on, up out of the years: *What's it all for?*

It seems that she carried her shame a long time, and the creature that found her out was the daftie. One night when old Sim came home from the fields the daftie pointed at her sister, Jess, and giggled, and mouthed and made slabbering sounds. Sim had paid her no heed a good twenty years, but something in the wrigglings of the creature took him. He cried *What's that?* and glowered at his wife, old Kate, with her thinning face and greyed hair.

But Kate knew nothing, like himself she stared at Jess that sat red-faced by the fire. And then while they stared Jess jumped to her feet, weeping, and ran from the room, and they saw—plain enough the way she was in, they'd been blind.

Old Sim gave a groan as an old horse groans when you

drive him his last bit bout up a hill, and stood and stared at the daftie, Jean, that was giggling and fleering there like a bairn, like something tint from his life long syne, in the kitchen quiet as the daylight waned.

§ 2. PLAY — HUGH MACDIARMID

THE PURPLE PATCH

SCENE: Summer evening. Beside gate in wall leading through churchyard to church. Congregation "skailing." Three groups, comprised each of six or seven persons, form themselves near the gate. All the people seem in an unusual state of excitement. Speakers in each of the three groups are heard simultaneously. The side letters indicate roughly the various speakers heard at the same time—although, for reading purposes, it is impossible to do this accurately (and so secure the exact counterpoint), since the different speakers speak at various rates, and the incidence of interjections, movements, etc., of the other component members of the groups varies incessantly. Occasionally a particularly striking phrase from the speaker in one group makes the eyes of the members of the other groups turn thither, away from their own speaker; an odd member is first attached to one group and then to another; inside each group others are always vainly endeavouring to get their word in, and move about; side conversations develop inside the groups, sometimes threatening to disintegrate them into smaller groups of trios or couples, while a certain amount of inter-activity by an occasional remark shouted over and the like is maintained between members of the different groups, which occasionally tend to fuse into one.

Dramatis Personæ

GROUP I. WILLIAM BEEDIE, an alert old chap with restless eyes and a thin sandy beard; a retired village postmaster who writes verses for the "Poet's Corner" of the local paper. His crony, DAVID DUNBAR, a buirdlier and more genial-looking old fellow. CHARLIE MEARNS, a long, thin old man with a lean, wrinkled face but twinkling eyes. JOHNNY SOUTAR, a little bow-legged man with an obvious "want" and a sort of "nihum-nahum" utterance.

GROUP II. MISS FREW, a tall ungainly, harsh-featured spinster. MRS. DAVID DUNBAR, a pleasant-faced little body, but with a sharp enough edge at her tongue at times, especially in conversation with Miss Frew, whom she intensely dislikes. MRS. ROEBUCK, Miss Frew's harassed-looking married sister, with a couple of girls about six and eight years old respectively. Her mother-in-law, old MRS. ROEBUCK, far gone in senile decay.

GROUP III. TAM STODDART, the village store-keeper, a stout man with a kindly aspect and an insisting way of speaking. ADAM PERT, the shoemaker, a caustic-tongued little hypocrite who plays up to his wife by "digging" at them who are his cronies behind her back. MRS. ADAM PERT, who "wears the breeks", a "managing" matron.

The REV. JOHN M'ILWRAITH. HEB DUNCAN, the veteran beadle.

A. *William Beedie:* It was a peculiar utterance—a maist peculiar utterance—there's nae gettin' awa' frae that; an' the wey he delivered it, an' the wild lichtnin'-like fleer o's een! It fair grippit me (*aside*—an' I'm nae green member noo); made me feel like a puppy held up by the slack skin o' its neck an' scaired to death for what 'bood to happen neist. I'd a dwamie feelin' o' pawin' oot a' airts an' fin'in' naethin' to claüt at. If he'd made it mair precise—gi'en time an' place, an' ony sort o' clue as to his real meanin' in introducin't whaur he did, yin 'ud ha'e felt different. Auld Dr. Gilruth's sermons were aye a' o' a'e piece—a' a'e 'oo'—an' sittin' a' thae years unner him has mebbe made us look owre muckle for the pure logic o' things. There were never ony doots aboot onything *he* said. But this new meenister o' oors is a different sow by the lug a' thegither. That's plain! Gosh, the thing fair ploupit oot there frae the maist innocent settin', like a twa-heided eagle hatchin' frae a bantam's egg unner yin's very nose. It's no' natural. It had nae conceivable connection w' onything else in the haill sermon. A canny eneuch sermon . . . tho' in an uncommon kind o' strain, but ye'd as soon lippen to meet a reid Injun in a' his wigwam an' warpaint i' the Market Place yonner i' braid daylicht as hae' a hearin' like yon i' the middle o' a discoorse that was mebbe a bit

ajee frae what we've come to consider plumb hereaboots, but was suffeecently straucht-gaen for a' that to fa' weel eneuch . . . frae a beginner, at ony rate, compared wi' the auld Doctor . . . on lugs used to discriminatin' a wee . . . between decent limits . . .

A. *Miss Frew* (*fairly flustered and not knowing what to do with her umbrella in her anxiety to gesticulate effectively*):—Losh, preserve's! I'm nae witch an' I've nae notion i' the warl' wha' the mannie was aimin' at; but—mark my words!—he'd *somebody* in his mind's e'e wi'oot a doot. An' no wi'oot cause; Weel, he's gi'en them fair warnin'. He's no' a man that'll stan' ony nonsense frae high or low. He hasna been lang here, but lang eneuch, seemin'ly, to ken that it's no' a' gowd that glitters even in Blawearie. He's a young man, but his heid's screwed on the richt side up, an' wi' yon twa glowerin' een o' his —like twa burnt hools in a blanket—ye can rest assured that he'll see richt through the whitest sepulchre i' the place to the abomination o' desolation inside. An' he's no' feart to speak. Auld Gilruth, canny man, daurna let his jaws snap, but even or he got owre auld he could never rise to sic heights o' richteous indignation. It was never in him. He was fer owre saft for Blawearie. But we've got a man at last (*sees her unfortunate phrase in time and quickly adds—not too quickly, however, to escape Mrs. Dunbar's meaning smile*)—a man efter God's ain hert! Some o' the mair freevolous dinna like it. I saw Missus Graham an' Missus Lowrie (*aside*—in her new hat, maist likely afore her auld yin's peyed, an' sic a contraption at that!), flushin' up like a couple o' beetroots . . . I'd like fine to ken juist *wha* an' *what* he *was* aimin' at, tho'. But murder'll oot, an' it's nae mare's nest 'ud gar him speak oot like yon, an' it's high time there was less smooth talk an' mair o' the fire o' God i' the pulpit. God micht be a' rubber doll for the wey some ministers ha'e him bobbin' aboot—stottin' frae a'e thing to the tither as if fleggit to touch owt. It's a real relief to hear yin again wha probes richt doon to the hert o' things. His een fair loupit oot like the claws o' an eagle, an' whaever he meen't 'll no get oot o' yon grip in a hurry. I'd a feelin' that the poo'er o' God until salvation had clean swoopit doon through him an' catched up oot o' oor very midst some hidden monster

o' uncleanness. . . . I gi'ed a kind o' side-scance at the seat neist mine, half-expectin' to see a vacant pew. I daurna look up when his een were at their fiercest, but I thocht that gin I could I'd see a damned soul wrigglin' half-way between the flair an' the ceilin' in the grip o' its maister. . . .

Both little girls have been listening in fascination, but at the words "damned soul wrigglin'," the elder bursts out giggling. The younger is extremely solemn of face, as if excogitating deeply, and tugs at her mother's skirt; but her mother is too busy slapping the elder's head and telling her what "she'll get when she gets hame—lauchin' like that, an' on the vera Sawbath evenin'."

A. *Tam Stoddart:* It'll no' dae. It'll no' dae ava. I dinna haud wi' hintin' an' hidin'. Nae guid ever cam' o' that. Playin' a kin' o' keek-a-boo wi' folk's souls. Let a man either lash oot wi't or haud his tongue. Ye dinna win souls by tricks o' talk an' play-actin' i' the pulpit. It does an immense amount o' hairm—the folk it's meent for 'ud be the vera last i' maist cases to tak' it to themsel's, but it sets a' the silly craturs i' the congregation fair bizzin' wi' excitement an' terror. It's the humble an' contrite o' hert that are easiest made believe they're vera deevils o' ineequity, singled oot for the wrath to come. But the hard nits can sit like lumps o' asbestos through the hettest harangue. Na! Na! The man hasna bin five minutes i' the place, an' can only ha'e been talkin' at large, shootin' oot his neck at random i' the hopes o' fetchin' doon somethin'. But he's owre big for his boots—an' fer owre wee for the boots o' the auld Doctor he's tryin' to fill. Heck! It's eneuch to mak' him turn in his grave—sic a sermon as that frae his auld pulpit. We're no' leevin' in Auld Testament times noo, an' he mauna come to Blawearie thinkin' to stalk muckle big game i' the sin line. I question vera much if there's a crime i' the haill community bigger than a bit poppin' flea (an' we've a' got plenty o' them), an' yet here's him bendin' the bow o' Ulysses by his wey o't, an' knockin' oot the feck o' the congregation wi' an arrow fit to smash a rhinoceros, juist like yon fool shootin' tenant o' a Yankee at the Todheid last back-en' wha took the auld mare for a

stray stag an' shot a haill hirsel o' sheep in his attempts to pot it . . .

B. *William Beedie* (*still at it, and going strong*):—I dinna think he kent it was comin'. Something took possession o'm—but it was for a' the warl juist like gettin' the richt end o' the wool an' ripplin' oot the haill stockin'. It made threads an' stour o' a' the rest o' his sermon, an' left us wi' nowt but a muckle hool—an abyss o' flame an' fury. The mair I think on't, the mair I'm shair the man couldna help himsel'. There was a superior foorce at work. It made his een lowe like a pair o' beacons on a pit-mirk nicht. Ye wadna ha'e thocht a wee bit white-faced shilpit cratur like yon could ha'e held sic a bleeze wi'oot burstin'. It turned the haill kirk an' a'body in't into a swirl o' stour. When he cockit his een up to the gallery I ventured to keek that wey tae, an' a' the folk i' the line o' his veesion were juist like a parcel o' motes reelin' in a beam o' licht wi' ooter darkness on baith sides. Man an' boy I've sat i' this kirk twice every Sawbath for five and sixty years, an' never saw or heard the like o't. There was mair than human poo'er in there the day, but whither it was the poo'er o' God, or . . .

B. *Mrs. Dunbar* (*with acerbity*):—Weel, it didna affec' me that wey, at ony rate. Quite the contrair! It's a hantle easier for some folk to picture puir souls wrigglin' between the grun' an' the lift than to imagine the kin' o' reeligion that could mak' ye feel that Jesus himsel' had slippit into the same pew wi' ye an' was shairin yer hymn-book. An' I've nae doot it comes mair natural to Mr. M'Ilwraith to steer up the fire an' brimstane, an' flap aboot wi' his goon like a figger o' fate, condemnin' folk to the pains o' hell forever, than to show them the roads to Heaven. It's no mony ministers that can look baith ways at aince like auld Dr. Gilruth, an' that bein' sae, I prefer them that look up, no' doon, maist. It ill becomes the like o' him—a mere herrin' o' a man!—to threaten to dae owt he canna undae, an' to talk o' bringin' doun the wrath o' God in a' its veesibility on the heid o' somebody present 'ud carry mair wecht wi' me, at ony rate, if I could feel that the prayers o' sic a man were juist as lief to be the savin' o' ony puir cratur. . . . An' as for the seat neist ye, I'd hae ye recollect that my puir auld mither sat there a' her marriet life, altho' she's been deid an' gane these fifteen years come Candlemas,

an' naebody's ever sat there since . . . unless it was mebbe yersel' when ye'd freens stayin' wi' ye, an' yer ain seat wasna quite eneuch to haud ye a' . . .

Younger of the two girls now succeeds in attracting her mother's attention, and the following colloquy is heard: —

Whit are ye tug, tug, tuggin' at my skirt for? Keep still, wull ye?

Mither—mither!

Whit is't then?

Wad it no' be faither the mannie meent?

Losh! Whitever pits that in yer heid, lassie?

Weel, ye ken whit he said on Setterday nicht when ye ca'd him a great muckle druck . . .

Can ye' no' haud yer tongue when her elders are speakin' (*slapping her over the hand*). An' as for you, teeheeing like a pea-hen (*as the elder sister bursts again into a wild giggle*). Juist you wait till I get ye hame . . .

(Meanwhile Miss Frew has joined issue with Mrs. Dunbar.)

B. *Miss Frew:*—Och, if the cap fits . . . but I didna mean onything personal, and (*very snippily indeed*) ye needna be sae snippy. But i'm shair there's mony forbye mysel' ha'e been lang tired o' the wishy-washy stuff that's maistly served up i' the name o' releegion nowadays. It tak's a guid nerve to be a *real eindoon* Christian. Yin canna but wunner hoo some puir bits o' things'll stand the shock o' the last Day an' Judgment. A clean conscience is nae great help, if it's as nesh as a' that. But tastes differ, an' I maun say I like releegion "neat", as my auld faither used to say, if I'm to ha'e it at a'. Heaven an' Hell's no' nice eneuch for some folk. They want a' sorts o' half-wey hooses to suit their particular requirements. . . . What I meent was that I felt that a verra prophet o' Israel, a Daniel come to Judgment, was i' the pulpit the day, an' that whatever was said was in God's ain voice.

B. *Mrs. Dunbar* (*sardonically*):—Wi' sic a Peterculter accent as yon!

B. *Miss Frew:*—He disna belang Fife in particular either. He's a' things to a' men, an' no' aye indulgin' in buttery compliments an' pleasant promises . . .

B. and C. *Old Mrs. Roebuck* (*in an uncanny voice*):—

The sumphish mob, o' penetration shawl,
May gape an' ferly at your cunning saul,
An' mak' ye fancy that there is desert
In thus employing a' your sneaking art.

Everybody looks at her in astonishment, afflicted by the recognition of some obscure pertinence in the verse. Frightened by the attention she has drawn upon herself, the old wife cunningly pretends that she has been trying to amuse one of her granddaughters, and, bending towards the youngest engagingly, in her way of it, continues—

Red, blue, an' green, an' likewise pearl,
I hae to fit the little girl: —
Wi' mony a bony tirly-wirl
Aboot the queets.

Mrs. Roebuck:—Wheesht mither, wheesht!

Old Mrs. Roebuck blackens with rage at being found out. She waits for her revenge till Mrs. Dunbar begins speaking again, and then, pointing a skinny forefinger at her daughter, and executing a sort of obscene movement in front of her, shrills out with a sort of vicious glee—

Her nainselle shook her naked breeches,
For she was tyred with his speeches;
She would far rather had a tirrle
O' an aquavitae barrel.

It takes a few minutes for Mrs. Roebuck—terribly flustered with shame and frightened for what her mother may say next—to force her back into sullen impassivity.

B. *Adam Pert* (*hypocritically*):—I'm surprised at ye, Tam Stoddart. It's nae lauchin' maitter. You an' yer Yankee shots. Men o' your kind seem to think that the fates o' immortal sauls are decided in a sort o' auction mairt, an' that God an' a wheen o' yersel's can sit doon an' discuss the run o' the business owre a tappit hen i' the back pairlour o' the "Black Swan". . . .

B. *Tam Stoddart:*—An', faith, there was nane better kent there than yersel', Adam, till ye went an' . . .

B. *Adam Pert:*—An' what?

B. *Tam Stoddart:*—Weel, ye ken what I was gaen to say—lost yer rib a second time, for it's weel kent that yer first wife had a braider an' kindlier view o' things, an' second thochts . . .

B. *Mrs. Adam Pert (with a warlike gleam in her eyes):* —An' second thochts means me, I suppose, Maister Stoddart. I hadna the pleasure o' kennin' my predecessor, as ye ken. But she was a kind o' cousin o' yours, I'm gi'en to understand. Weel, a'body's entitled to their ain opeenions, nae doot, but it wadna dae you ony ill to think mair an' jaw less, an' ye micht dae a heap waur than juist pop back into the vestry an' discuss wi' Mr. M'Ilwraith hoo the puir misguided lassie's opeenions may hae changed since she deed. If she's lookin' doon on's noo. I'se warran' she kens that Adam was owre big a handfu' for the likes o' her, an she'll be gey an' glad I took him owre when I did, for her ain sake, if no' for his, for if he'd gane to utter destruction wi'oot kennin't, like some ithers he used to mix amang in his unregenerate days, she'd hae had to thole her share o' the blame an' her condeetion the day . . .

B. *Tam Stoddart:*—Some folk ken mair o' ither folk's business no' only i' this life, but i' the neist, than's canny.

B. *Mrs. Adam Pert:*—Aye! an' some folk ken the real facts o' their condition here an' chances hereafter sae little that we'd fain hope the exemption o' born eediots frae the operations o' free wull an' choice may ha'e a wider application than it 'ud be compleementary to indicate. But, mark my words, a tappit hen'll no' keep onybody's stammack lang on the Day that is to come. . . .

C. *David Dunbar:*—That's just it. Ye hut the nail on the heid. I canna say that I'm fair convinced it *was* the real Mackay—I mean, the poo'er o' the Holy Ghost—mysel'. The de'il plays some unco tricks. But at ony rate, if it wasna the genuine article, it was a marvellous imitation, an' the maist impressive thing o' the kind I've seen since auld Dr. Nixon afore Gilruth's time, said, "*Let everybuddy sing,*" wi' sic emphasis on the everybuddy that we'd nae sooner sterted than puir Jimmy Carruthers, wha was born deef an' dumb, joined in wi' sic an unearthly timmer that half the congregation lost their voices wi' shock. . . .

C. *Charlie Mearns:*—An' it minds me o' anither occasion when a vera peculiar effec' was conjured up—a very

peculiar effec' indeed. A veesitin' meenister—a long drink o' water frae Paisley wey—had just gi'en oot his text, when a cock ootside gied aff wi' a tremenjous "Cock-a-doodle-do!" The haill congregation gapit like a'e man; like a boxin' referee or an auctioneer, somehoo or ither there was nowt i' their heids but the coont—yin—twa—three! When the cock crew thrice a sort o' spasm o' fear ran through the haill buildin'. Naebody kent whaur to look or what to dae. Then, daggont, if the doited fowl didna craw aince mair, an' the tension brak' an' we a' burst oot lauchin' in a helpless kind o' way, the veesitin' meenister leadin' off wi' a howl like a hyaena. . . .

C. *David Dunbar:*—But what did the man *mean?* That's the thing. It was like seein' something that was naither flesh, fowl, or guid reid herrin'.

C. *Charlie Mearns:*—Like the beast in Revelations!

C. *David Dunbar:*—Ye canna gi'e ony name to it. Tak'n word for word, it was a rigmarole o' nonsense—every phrase seemed chosen because it was the unlikeliest possible phrase to tack on to the yin that gaed afore it. An' yit there's nae gainsayin' the terriffic effec' he somehoo or ither produced. . . .

C. *Charlie Mearns:*—It was something like the kind o' grand paralysin' feelin' that can sometimes be created by brakin' oot, wi'oot ony warnin', frae a plain everyday kind o' passage into a crashin' bit o' French or Latin . . . only fer stranger.

C. *William Beedie:*—Aye! It was stranger than French or Latin. It was a language that has lost a lot in Blawearie for mony years i' the coorse o' translation into what passes for English. It was the language o' God . . .

C. *Johnny Soutar:*—Ye dinna mean he was speakin' i' Braid Scots?

C. *William Beedie* (*savagely*):—No! ye gowk! . . .

C. *Johnny Soutar* (*anxiously*):—Oh, I didna ken. Dinna get angry wi' folk less gleg i' the uptak' than yersel'! Only, if it had been Braid Scots, nae maitter hoo auld-farran', I'se warran' I'd ha'e kent a wird or twa here an' there at ony rate.

C. *William Beedie* (*disregarding Soutar*):—Ye ken the text, "My words are not as your words." Weel, there ye are. God tak's oor words when he speaks to us, but he fills them wi' his ain meanin's, which are quite different to

ony we gi'e them oorsel's. An' that's the wey they soon' half-familiar, an' yet entirely strange an' beautiful an' terrible. . . . *But here he comes!*

C. *Mrs. Dunbar (returning to the "muttons"):*—A prophet o' Israel wad ha'e been sair oot o' plaice an' a maist unprofitable objec' in Blawearie pulpit at this time o' day! We've made some progress durin' the past twa-three thoosan' years—although ye wadna think sae to hear some folks talkin'! It used to be thocht great sport hereaboots to gang an' see a public hangin', an' it strikes me the feelin's no' deid yet, an' some folks gang to the kirk to enjoy the thocht o' some o' their neebors bein' fried to death in hell. But I dinna think that Christ himsel' had muckle stammack for that kin' o' spectacle . . .

C. *Miss Frew:*—Christ came to earth to seek an' to save . . .

C. *Mrs. Dunbar:*—I ken (*tartly*)—an' his meenisters 'ud dae weel to follow his example while the time lasts. They'll need it a'.

C. *Miss Frew (completing her sentence with ostentatious patience):*—But God'll judge at the hinder-en'.

C. *Mrs. Dunbar:*—It s'ud be left to God an' to the hinder-en' then. Mr. M'Ilwraith (an' him an unmarriet man that disna ken what every man an' wumman born has meent to some mither) spak' wi' as muckle assurance the day as if he were God himsel' dividin' the sheep an' the goats at his appinted time. I wunner (*her temper rising*) God didna . . .

C. *Mrs. Roebuck:—Wheesht, here he comes!*

C. *Tam Stoddart:*—Christ himsel' wisna averse to a wee drappie noo an' then, for his stammack's sake.

C. *Mrs. Adam Pert (scornfully):*—Ye're no' the only elder o' the kirk wha's mair fu' o' Paul's clash than the gospel o' the livin' God.

C. *Tam Stoddart (patiently):*—Weel, if that was Paul an' no' the Lord himsel', at ony rate it was Christ that cheenged the water into wine. . . .

C. *Mrs. Adam Pert:*—To suit some folk he'd ha'e ha'en to aboleesh water a' thegither—an' then ye'd ha'e been aye dookin'.

C. *Tam Stoddart (losing his temper):*—Hyech! I expec' a wumman'll ha'e the last word at the vera Judgment itsel'.

C. *Mrs. Adam Pert (victoriously):*—Nae doot; but mair

than likely if she has, it'll be to plead for some sumph o' a man.

C. *Adam Pert:—Wheesht, here he comes!*

The Rev. Mr. M'Ilwraith and the veteran beadle, Heb Duncan, come slowly down the path from the church to the gate. All eyes are turned towards them.

Coming alongside the folks: —

Mr. M'Ilwraith:—Well, how did you like the sermon?

In Chorus:— { A searchin' utterance. / Aye, sir, yon's the stuff to stir folks up. / A whiff o' the pure Jerusalem, etc., etc.

Mr. M'Ilwraith (patting little Roebuck girls' heads, and going off):—We must try all kinds of methods.

The old beadle stands giggling away into his beard at a great rate, incoherently amused.

Several Voices:—What are ye lauchin' at?

The Beadle (at last):—Lauchin'! It 'ud mak' a cat laugh. The method was mebbe his ain, but the sermon wasna. Dr. Gilruth gied it frae the vera self-same pulpit here close on twenty years ago, an' I've heard it fower times since to my shair an' certain knowledge, an' bits o't at orra times forbye. . . . Ye ken that muckle purple passage in the middle o't. Weel, when Dr. Gilruth was writin't he found yin o' his bit sheets o' paper half-fu' to start wi'—wi' a passage he'd been copyin' frae that fantastical divine, Dr. Donne—a great Yankee revivalist, if I remember rightly! —an' absent-minded-like, thocht that he'd juist written it as pairt o's sermon. So he tacked on the rest to the end o't. He never noticed it the first time he delivered it; but I spotted the cuckoo i' the nest, an' when he gied it a second time, I spiered why he keepit' in a passage that had nae connection wi' the rest o' the sermon ava! "Man, I never noticed it," he said, an' then he tell't me hoo it must ha'e happened. "But I'll juist leave it there," he added. "It may be an accident, or it may be the hand o' God. It'll no' dae ony ill in either case. Them that comes to the kirk i' the richt frame o' mind'll never notice that onything's amiss, an' them that dae notice'll be puzzled to death to ken what to mak' on't. . . ."

(*A Study in Faces.*)

CURTAIN

§ 3. Sketch Lewis Grassic Gibbon

ABERDEEN

No foreigner can think of that vulgarization of Scots humour and the Scots lyric which Sir Harry Lauder has brought to such pitch of perfection without a bye-thought on a Scots city which would seem to breed, principally, if not entirely, Lauder-imitators. For the benefit of the English-reading public Aberdeen is the home of the typical "Scotch" joke. In this the Scot is shown as ludicrously mean, he is the victim and perpetrator of a farcical and brainless greed. And most of the material for those tales and fantasies of so-called humour are exported from Aberdeen itself, as the editor of any light-hearted English periodical will confirm.

Now, a tale may be read, quite consciously and knowingly, as humour-fantasy, and yet have curious repercussions on the mind of the reader. So with Aberdeen: it is impossible that its streets can be thronged with reproduction of this odd caricature of humanity who parades in the jokes. Still—and the good Englishman and the good American display a kind of humorous contemptuous care in their dealings with an authentic Aberdonian, set foot in Aberdeen itself with wary grins on their faces. Recently I received a reply-paid envelope from an American publisher. In the course of the accompanying letter the publisher referred to the envelope, (in a business-like fashion, without inverted commas, because the joke in this minor aspect has grown stale and passed into the ordinary vocabulary of American business) as an "Aberdeen envelope." Once, in Jerusalem, I struck up acquaintance with an intelligent and interesting Syrian. We talked ethnology; and in the course of the conversation I told him that I was born in Aberdeenshire in Scotland. He was amused and pitiful, though a little hazy. "Aberdeen—it is the pariah place, is it not?"

These phenomena—Aberdeen's comic reputation and Aberdonian humour itself—are worthy of some investigation, just as the man who laughs too loudly and too long stirs curiosities in the mind of the sceptical bystander.

Why so much laughter—and why that steely ring in the last guffaw? Here is an Aberdonian "funny story":

> "An Aberdonian died and gave instructions in his will that his body be cremated. This was done. The day after the cremation the widow heard a knock at the door. She opened it and saw a small message-boy standing on the doorstep holding out a package towards her. 'What's this?' she enquired. 'Your husband, Mem,' said the boy, '—his ashes, you know." Slowly the widow took the package in her hand. 'His ashes. Oh, ay. *But where's the dripping?*' "

I choose this example deliberately as that of an Aberdonian story insufficiently padded. You laugh, but (if you have any imagination at all) you have a slight qualm. The grisliness below the humour is insufficiently concealed. You can smell the stench of that burning body, you can see the running human fats—with a dish in appropriate position to collect them. . . . You see too closely in this instance the grinning skull behind the large, jolly countenance of the laughing man; you may suspect him, outside the flare of lights in the bar and the help of alcohol, as one solemn and serious enough, uneasy, haunted by an unending apprehension of life as a bleak enough parade.

Bleakness, not meanness or jollity, is the keynote to Aberdonian character, not so much lack of the graces or graciousness of existence as lack of colour in either of these. And this is almost inevitable for anyone passing his nights and days in The Silver City by the Sea. It is comparable to passing one's existence in a refrigerator. Aberdeen is built, largely and incredibly, of one of the most enduring and indestructible and appalling building-materials in use on our planet—grey granite.

It has a flinty shine when new—a grey glimmer like a morning North Sea, a cold steeliness that chills the heart. Even with weathering it acquires no gracious softness, it is merely starkly grim and uncompromising. The architect may plan and build as he will with this material—with its variant, white granite, he may rear the curvetting spires and swooping curlecues and looping whirlimagigs of Marischal College—and not escape that sense of one calamitously in jail. Not only are there no furbelows possible in this architecture, there is amid it, continually,

the uneasy sense that you may not rest here, you may not lounge, you cannot stand still and watch the world go by. . . . Else presently the warders will come and move you on.

To know that feeling in its full intensity the investigator must disregard the publicity posters and visit Aberdeen in November. Whatever the weather as his train crossed from Kincardineshire into Aberdeenshire, he will arrive at Aberdeen Station in sleet. Not falling sleet or drifting sleet, but *blown* sleet—blown with an infernal and unescapable persistence from all points of the compass, from the stretches of the harbour, from the Duthie Park, down Market Street. And through this steely pelt he will see the tower and lour and savage grimace of the grey granite all about him, curdling his nerve centres even as the sleet curdles his extremities. If he holds by Guild Street and Market Street up to the pride of Aberdeen, Union Street, he will discover how really vocal this materialization of an Eskimo's vision of hell may become. Aberdeen is, without exception, the most exasperatingly noisy city in the world. Paris is bad—but one accepts Paris, it is free, it is anarchistic, the cabmen are trying to kill each other—a praiseworthy pursuit—and Citröens were made by devils in hell and manned by chauffeurs from purgatory—and it is all very amusing. But Aberdeen is not amusing in its epitome, Union Street. This street is paved with granite blocks, and over these, through the sleeting downpour, trams rattle, buses thud, and (unescapable) four large iron-wheeled drays hauled by Clydesdale horses are being drawn at break-neck speed. There is no amusement in the thought of the drivers being killed: you can see in each gaunt, drawn face that the driver is doing it not for pleasure or the fun of life or because he is joyously and righteously drunk—he is doing it to support a wife, five children, a blind grandmother, and a sister in the Aberdeen Infirmary.

Aberdeen is the cleanest city in Britain: it makes you long for good, wholesome dirt, littered roadways and ramshackle buildings leaning in all directions, projecting warm brown sins and rich smutty reds through an enticing, grimy smile. Union Street has as much warmth in its face as a dowager duchess asked to contribute to the Red International Relief. If you escape the trams and the drays and the inferno where Market Street debouches on Union Street, and hold west up Union Street, you will have the

feeling of one caught in a corridor of the hills. To right and left tower the cliffs, scrubbed, immaculate and unforgiving. Where Union Terrace breaks in upon Union Street there is an attempt at a public Garden. But the flowers come up and take one glance at the lour of the solicitors' officers which man Union Terrace, and scramble back into the earth again, seeking the Antipodes.

Union Terrace is beset with statues: the advocates stroll to their windows from plodding through briefs for the Sheriff Court and look out on King Edward to the right, Robert Burns in the middle and William Wallace to the left. Aberdeen may be forgiven much because of those statues. For her flinty granitic heart was moved to wisdom when she commissioned them, giving their subjects that due proportion and appearance which they bore in history: King Edward is merely vulgar, Burns pathetic and Wallace heroic. The investigator may do worse than consider the Wallace with care: round the plinth are written quotations from his speeches to the Army of the Commons of Scotland; lounging upon the plinth, yawning and bored (even in the sleet) are the tired and the old and the unemployed of Aberdeen in great number. Wallace fascinates them, you would say. He belongs to a past they dare not achieve, they have come to such horrific future as he never visioned.

In his right hand is a great sword; his outflung left hand points—to the nearby bulk, cupola'ed and gilded, of His Majesty's Theatre. But I think the gesture is unwarranted, for it is an excellent theatre, there are folk and institutions in Aberdeen far more worthy of gesture and sword. One wonders if the slum landlords of Correction Wynd or the Gallowgate, emerging from their cars to make their way to the padded fauteuils of His Majesty's, ever cast an uneasy glance at the great Guardian.

Probably not—unless some socialist orator is holding forth from the plinth. It is a favourite place of the orator, the communist orator for preference. Unemployed Aberdeen chews tobacco and listens vaguely and smokes vague cigarettes, and you can hear the orator at a great distance, the thin Aberdonian voice in the thin Aberdonian patois —full of long *ee's,* and conversions of *wh's* into *f's*. . . . Agitationally, in spite its unemployed, Aberdeen sleeps these days. A friend of mine once led forth a procession of the unemployed: the mounted police charged: and when

they had passed my friend was found clinging far up in the branches of a tree. This is the reality that has succeeded those visions of the barricade that vexed young folk of my ilk in the War-time days: days that distance covers with a fine glamour, when the mob broke up the peace-time meeting in the Music Hall addressed by Ramsay MacDonald: and a party of them made to storm the platform: and a socialist pugilist pacified them, asking for a single representative to come up: and one belligerent young man ascended: and demanded to be led to Ramsay: and the socialist pugilist agreed: and took the young man behind the scenes and socked him in the jaw, and came dragging back the body as an exhibition of what Ramsay did to interrupters. . . . Or another meeting, with locked doors, which a company of the Gordon Highlanders attempted to storm: and broke down the upper half of the door, and climbed in one by one: and as they descended were met by a solemn, six-foot pacifist with the limbs of an aurochs and hands like hams: who solemnly and pitifully knocked each one unconscious: and then revived them and carried them upstairs to the meeting, on the soldiers' tearful promise that they *would* be good. . . . Or the founding of the Aberdeen Soviet when the news of the Bolshevik Revolution came through from Russia; and how I and a cub reporter from another paper attended the foundation meeting; and were elected to the Soviet Council, forgetting we were pressmen; and spent perspiring minutes with our chief reporters afterwards, explaining that we could not report the meeting being ourselves good sovietists. . . . *O tempora! O mores!*

Remote as the banners of the Army of the Commons. Yet (and to presume that the sleet is over, and you are now in your overcoat) if you turn rightwards from Wallace into that grouping and festering of mean streets that lie behind and beyond the Infirmary, surely it is impossible that these things have passed? There are odd little shops here, with revolutionary journals for sale? Instead, odd little shops which sell stockings and shirts and such-like necessitous intimacies on the hire-purchase system: and sue with great savagery the improvident purchasers. Fifteen years ago that young cub reporter who, with myself, had been elected to the Aberdeen Soviet—we were so young and full of dreams we could not sleep o' nights. We prowled Aberdeen

all the hours of the night, seeking not amorous adventure, but talking the moon into morning about jolly and heartsome and splendid things: life, death, the Revolution and the great green-cheeseness of the moon. . . . And the years went by, and I journeyed afar; and garnered a little in experience, including a keen distaste for that snarling cry of the machine-gun which sends a man clawing earthwards on his belly; and twelve years went by and I came again to Aberdeen; and for curiosity I wandered into its police court one morning; and a shameful woman had purchased knickers from the owner of a little chain of shops; and had neglected her payments, and was now being sued, poor proletarian with her red-chapped hands and her wrinkled, terrified face, and her poor, shifting eyes and her stammering voice. . . . I turned away my eyes and felt unreasonably sick. But the voice of the owner of the chain of shops brought back my attention as he spoke from the witness-box. And he was ——.

With me the investigator turns to a thing more pleasant —Allenvale Cemetery, where the dead of Aberdeen lie in serried lines under immense granitic monuments. They move one to a wondering horror. Granite, grey granite, in birth, in puberty, adolescence, grey granite encasing the bridal room, grey granite the rooms of blear-eyed old age. And even in death they are not divided. . . . Lower middle-class Aberdeen comes here of a Sunday in its Sunday blue suit and yellow boots and dickie and bowler: and parades, and admires the monuments, and goes back to Aberdeen high tea.

High tea in Aberdeen is like no other meal on earth. It is the meal of the day, the meal par excellence, and the tired come home to it ravenous, driven by the granite streets, hounded in for energy to stoke against that menace. Tea is drunk with the meal, and the order of it is this: First, one eats a plateful of sausages and eggs and mashed potatoes; then a second plateful to keep down the first. Eating, one assists the second plateful to its final home by mouthfuls of oatcake spread with butter. Then you eat oatcake with cheese. Then there are scones. Then cookies. Then it is really time to begin on tea—tea and bread and butter and crumpets and toasted rolls and cakes. Then some Dundee cake. Then—about half-past seven—someone shakes you out of the coma into which you have fallen

and asks you persuasively if you wouldn't like another cup of tea and just *one* more egg and sausage. . . .

And all night long, on top of this supper and one of those immense Aberdonian beds which appear to be made of knotted ship's cable, the investigator, through and transcending the howl of the November sleet-wind, will hear the lorries and the drays, in platoons, clattering up and down Market Street. They do it for no reason or purpose, except to keep you awake. And in the morning when you descend with a grey face and an aching head, they provide you with an immense Aberdeen breakfast; and if you halt and gasp somewhere through the third course they send for the manager who comes and questions you gravely as to why you don't like the food?—should he send for a doctor?

I'm presuming the investigator has taken a room in one of the hotels in Market Street. They are very good and cheap and never advertise, and this is their free advertisement in return for their unostentatious virtues. And their windows look out on Aberdeen Harbour, a wide, dull stretch round which I can never wander these days without a vague feeling that all is not well with the harbour, there is a definite something missing in the ships and shipping. And then I remember: the War-time camouflage when the ships rode bravely bespattered in painted zigzags, and all kinds of odd people came wandering across the North Sea and were landed at Aberdeen from those pantomime vessels. M. Krassin was deported from England by way of Aberdeen and I attempted to interview him as he boarded his boat: he had a little beard and a twisted nose; and I spoke to him in halting Russian and he said kindly that he spoke English when he was allowed to—only he wasn't. And as I came away from that abortive interview I saw a soldier walking along the quays, an elderly man, a sergeant, in full equipment, with rifle and steel helmet. And he stopped and looked into the water, thoughtfully, and laid aside the rifle and helmet, and jumped into the water. There he swam to and fro for a little and some loafers threw him a rope and dragged him out. He shook himself, large, solemn, like a great dog, picked up the rifle and helmet, and departed towards the station without saying a word. . . .

Twice weekly in the summer season the London boat comes into Aberdeen, and twice weekly departs. The

Aberdonians are an emotional people: they assemble in great multitudes on the quay where the London boat is leaving. As the syrens hoot they begin to cheer and wave handkerchiefs. About a tenth of the two hundred waving from the shore have friends or relatives on board. The rest are there moved by a curious pity. I have seen an Aberdeen woman in tears as she waved towards the departing boat, though she knew not a soul on board. Some are even more enthusiastic. They pursue the boat from quay to quay, bridge to bridge, waving and weeping, till they can pursue no further. The passengers stand and wave and cheer in return, then light cigars and stroke their tartan ties and tell how they climbed up Lochin-y-Gair.

Leftwards, Footdee sleeps with silent shipyards and factories these days, with great rusting cranes lifting their unmoving chains high in the air, and long cobbled walks silent and nerveless enough. A kind of palsy has fallen here, the investigator will note: the trawlers still come in of a morning in long sweeping lines, with laden creels for the Fish Market, but Footdee smells ill even these salt mornings, even this stinging November morning when the wind has veered a point and it has forgotten to sleet. This assuredly is the morning to survey the Beach.

The Beach, it is at once evident, was constructed by a cretin brought up under the tuition of an imaginative, unreliable, but high-spirited gorilla. Behind it stretch the Links: in front of it, the North Sea. Its buttressed walls rise and swoop with a care admirable for the gambollings of the lesser anthropoids, if somewhat at variance with the needs of a more normal populace. To your right is the Amusements Park; here the gorilla relaxed and scratched and was momentarily human, for here is a lovely scenic railway. The investigator, turning from the horror of the North Sea and the equal horror of the Beach, concludes that if he lived in Aberdeen he would spend his days on that scenic railway.

But this is Aberdeen by day. Aberdeen by night is a different city, thronged with a more subtle, a different folk. The watching granite relaxes on the façades of the great grey buildings, in the manners and customs of the folk in the streets. At eight o'clock on Friday night all Aberdeen assembles and parades in Union Street; and here the investigator stands aside and views with care the high

cheek-bones in the brachycephalic heads of the males, that singularly dis-harmonic head that is so singularly Aberdonian. The proletarian wears a cap with a long check peak, the petit bourgeois wears the regulation bowler hat, the bourgeois walks bare-headed, for he is in plus-fours and his domed bald head is browned with the suns of the Links. There is an endless flow and unflow of the thin Aberdeen speech. But the bourgeois speaks English, and, strangely, speaks it successfully, acquiring depths and rhythm as he mislays the false, pale vowels and slurred consonants of his city. The women wear clothes indistinguishable from those of Paris or New York. But a strange fate haunts the Aberdonian woman. She cannot walk. Some go by with a duck-like waddle, some prance on squattering toes, some slouch with laggard steps. It is the granite side-walks responsible, the investigator concludes, as the hours fade and the throngs fade with them, and down over the Town Hall the clock-towers tell it is one o'clock.

But for prostitutes, policemen, and journalists Union Street is deserted now. With a sough and a sigh the night-wind, edged as with a knife, is blowing along Union Terrace: King Edward stands freezing, bald-headed: down in the station a train chugs remotely, with a flying shower of sparks. In the glare of the night lights the tramlines swoop down towards Market Street like great snakes: in a remote shop-front a policeman is flashing his lamp. A young man in a slouch hat goes by, yawning: the *Journal* has been put to bed. Two girls consult the investigator on his needs for the night. He is regretful, with another engagement. They intimate, drifting away, a profound conviction in his illegitimacy. So to bed.

In the days when I first knew Aberdeen two names fascinated me—St. Machar and Kittybrewster. They lie at points remotely one from the other, the St. Machar Cathedral and the Kittybrewster district, but these the investigator (who has now purchased a fresh supply of woolly underwear) may not miss. St. Machar's Cathedral, they tell us, was builded first in the fourteenth century—there are still scraps of fourteenth-century architecture there. But towards the close of the seventeenth century the central tower fell in and smashed and demolished

greatly chancel and transept, transforming the building from an active agency in dissemination of a cultural aberration to a seemly haunt for the archæologist. St. Machar sleeps through it all undisturbed. But from youth the notion persists in my mind that he turns in uneasy remembrance now and again of the days when he and Kitty Brewster——

Nor can any tell where Kitty lies. Perhaps beneath the smoke and soot and thundering trains of the Goods Station, lying, like good King Olaf, or Arthur in Avalon, waiting till they call her again and she wake and come forth and free the world. Dreaming below that clatter of an industrialism gone mad, Kitty must yet hear on the early mart mornings sounds more familiar and loved—the lowing of the great cattle herds they drive to the sales there—smell, smell back through the centuries that odour of dust and dung and cowishness that maybe haunted the hills when she and Machar——

But this is incredible romance. From earliest times Aberdeen has engaged itself in eschewing romance. Hardly had Kitty and St. Machar died in each other's arms (after a wild night's orgy on the Beach scenic railway) than Romance blew her trumpets through Aberdeen. It was the year 1411, and Donald of the Isles, gaunt, Highland and hairy, was nearing the city with an army of northland raiders. The citizens ran and busked themselves, piled into the tramcars at Castlegate and poured out in their thousands to contest the march of Donald. They met him at Harlaw, a misty morning, when the dew was white as hoar or grey granite on the whins, and arrayed themselves in long, dour ranks of spearmen against the usual Highland tactic. Donald flung forward the clansmen in sweeping lines of attack: Aberdeen stood fast through a long and bloody day and at night Donald marched back the remnants of his forces into the hills. This was a great turn of the tide in Scots history—and Aberdeen wrought it.

It was a city that remained incurably and gloriously anti-Highland. Stout business men from Mannofield and Cults may nowadays send their children to the High School in kilts and bonnets: in ancient times they would as soon have thought of sending them forth into the world in dishclouts and tompions. In the '45 the rest of Scotland might go Prince Charlie mad: Aberdeen stared out from its granite

doorways with a dour startlement, then turned its back on the whole ill business. Freedom, the winds of romance, the crying of banners marching south—not for it, not for the flinty souls who matched their flinty dwellings. So instead it aided and abetted the men of Hanover, it fêted and feasted the dour butcher Cumberland returning from Culloden field, and made him a guest of the Provost at No. 13 in the Guestrow—and there it stands unto this day to tell you if I lie.

But it is under orders for demolition—great sections of the older streets and wynds stand condemned, streets and wynds with antique names that move the antiquarian to suitable regrets when he considers their fate—the Upper Kirkgate, the Nether Kirkgate, the Gallowgate, the Guestrow. But I have no such regrets. Those gates to kirks and gallows: you think of a fœtid sixteenth century stench and the staring mobs watching some poor, tormented hind dragged out to the Gallows in Market Square—and you turn, with relief and a new resolve, to face the glinting, flinting structures that tower new-built up Union Street.

For if you cannot come to terms with the grey granite, you must come to an understanding or else escape into Golf and the Conservative Club, if you have the suitable status, or into pub-crawling and the drinking of Red Biddies, that curious Aberdonian stimulant, if you are of the plebs. The understanding is no easy thing. One detests Aberdeen with the detestation of a thwarted lover. It is the one haunting and exasperatingly lovable city in Scotland—its fascination as unescapable as its shining mail.

But is there need to escape? There are moments when I think of it as the essential—something to be apprehended and in its apprehension to uncover new countries of stark and glowing wonder, something lighted and shining with a fine flame, cold and amber and gold, behind the flinty cliffs of Union Street, the flinty cheekbones of the disharmonic faces that press about you in an Aberdeen tram. I prefer to think that the bitterly underpaid and wet and sogging fisherman stumping up from the Fish Market after a night on the reel and drummle of the tides has apprehended that granite-quality and made of it, warmed and kindly, his life quality . . . The investigator looks after him with a warmth and interest in the grey of the sleeting November morning

as he peers from the stalactited window of his hotel bedroom and then turns to consult a train time-table.

As for the women of Aberdeen . . . it is strange the vagrant associations the mind hinges on this word and that. About half of the women of Aberdeen appear to rejoice in the name of Grizel—and rejoice with justness, for my saner self tells me it is a lovely and incisive name. But for some strange reason I can never hear it pronounced without thinking of a polar bear eating an Eskimo.

And that is all about Aberdeen.

§ 4. Essay — Hugh MacDiarmid

POLITICIANS

I have known most of our Scottish politicians of the last quarter of a century, and many other politicians: De Valera, Ion McNeill, "Fanny" Fitzgerald, C. B. Stanton of Aberdare, "General" Drummond, Madame Sorgue. My name is coupled with that of Sidney Webb (Lord Passfield) in special acknowledgements for services rendered in the preface to the Fabian Society's book, "Rural Reform" published twenty years ago. I remember in my early teens I had grave conscientious scruples about joining the Edinburgh University Fabian Society, explaining (with an agitated gesture of my right hand on the little finger of which I had a curly black "pig's tail" cigarette-holder) to my amused seniors, Professor Sarolea and the late Professor James Seth, that "I was really an Anarchist, of course". Which was true, and remains so (though, equally of course, I am at present a member of the Communist Party). I walked over to Merthyr Tydvil from Ebbw Vale to meet Keir Hardie, and used to write for his paper, "The Merthyr Pioneer." But it is of more recent Scottish politicians I want to write here. I used to "put them up" at my home in Montrose: Campbell Stephen, "Joe" Westwood, Drummond Shields. "Willie" Graham was an old boyhood friend of mine; Duncan Graham—I am led on by the sameness of the surname—I last encountered where in London one encounters everybody worth knowing, in Charlie Lahr's bookshop in Red Lion Street. Maxton and Adamson I "chaired for" on many occasions; I had a particular

admiration for E. D. Morel and shall always be glad to have had the pleasure and privilege of knowing him. But these are all Socialist M.P.s? Well, I am writing about politicians, and I have never accounted the others that—at least if they are, the Socialists aren't and I prefer the Socialists. Or used to. Now I do not think any of them are politicians at all; that politics is a sham-fight and shadow-show, and that it is high time it was giving way to the reality, the economic issue, and the solution of that, which is Douglasism. But it mustn't be thought all the same that I never actually encountered in the flesh what is known as a Tory or a Liberal. I have had tea in the House of Commons with my good friend Mr. John Buchan. And I have even met Mr. Ramsay MacDonald (though what he was I never knew—or always knew too well and found it impossible owing to the law of libel to say)—but here I can base my little quarrel with him (as I did in actual correspondence between us) on literary grounds for in a singularly stupid and impertinent interview, even for him, he lucubrated on the subject of the Scottish Renaissance and had the ill-taste to include among the vital Scottish writers of to-day such negligible scribblers as Jimmy Welsh and Joe Corrie. And that, mark you, even after I had written my "Ballad of the General Strike"! Ugh! Almost as bad as my friend Bob Hislop of the Revolutionary Writers of the World, who has the audacity to eke out his list of our proletarian authors with the name of John S. Clarke! Oh, and I knew Asquith too. Well, I ask you! What a dunderhead! What an owl! I intend to say nothing of kakistocrats like Sir Robert Horne, Sir John Gilmour, and Major Walter Elliot, except that that is precisely what they are—kakistocrats. That is my predominant feeling about all politicians of all parties—that it is almost incredible that men of such petty calibre, with such a lack of genuine accomplishment of any kind, should occupy such a large part in our public life. Politics are a kind of abracadabra which demonstrably lacks the attributes which it arrogates to itself, and which, in the absence of these, to an overwhelming degree subserves not what the majority of the public even yet believe, nor what even some of the politicians themselves in their more expansive moments may make themselves believe, but infinitely more sordid and unscrupulous and shameful ends. I am aware that there is no novelty in saying this; I am by

no means the first to realize—it is largely common property—that politics are a dirty game. But how utterly unnecessary it all is is perhaps a newer and far less common realization. Two generalizations by the way occur to me. The first is that, contrary to their professions and contrary to the general assumption of their supporters, the Socialist M.P.s have not only no knowledge whatever of economics but a natural incapacity, an instinctive inability, for giving economics any consideration whatever. They live in a state of invincible ignorance on this subject. The second is that the majority of Scottish M.P.s would not even profess—and it would be equally impossible for the others to sustain the profession—to have any sound knowledge of or passionate concern with Scottish affairs. Scottish questions only enter into their purview as discrete phenomena—local government issues raised now and again from their proper sphere on to the plane of political consideration. They are never seen in relation to each other—never co-ordinated into any conception of national circumstance, potentiality or policy. There is not a single phase of Scottish affairs which has ever been treated by them or by the Scottish newspapers with the seriousness, the thoroughness, the fully-documented circumstantiality and completeness that is regularly devoted by the same politicians and the same newspapers to all manner of issues appertaining to other parts of the British Empire and to foreign countries which it is one of the conventions of our existing politics, one of the elements of the current cant, to pretend to have any real significance, or ought to have, for Scottish electors. These far fetched and irrelevant issues constitute the staple of the game, however; Scottish questions only very occasionally manage by some means or other to emerge on to that plane, and when they do there is a pretty general feeling of the absurdity of their having done so and they are speedily shuffled off the stage again into their proper obscurity. The limelight that plays indiscriminatingly on almost everything else is not for them; let alone the X-rays of thorough scrutiny.

I should like to be in a position to assemble all the Scottish M.P.s in a room and set them to answer an examination paper of say twenty questions on Scottish subjects—twenty questions on points concerned with the actual practice, position, problems, and prospects of the

industries which constitute the means of livelihood of sections of our community. I am certain that they would be more hopelessly at sea, that their attempts at answers would be even more appalling, than the amazing misconceptions and utter inaccessibility even to most elementary points in regard to well-known poems recorded as having been given by University students and so devastatingly analysed by Professor I. A. Richards. Such little deviations as most of them have ever made from the stock patter, the conventional rigmarole, of party-politics into comments upon genuine Scottish matters would make, if they were carefully collected together from reports of their speeches in the House and in the country, a well-nigh incredible anthology of sheer ineptitude. My contention is readily susceptible of corroborative evidence. Can any reader refer me to any article, any speech, on any Scottish subject whatever made during the past quarter of a century which ranks as an authoritative utterance on the subject which is of a quality equal even to that of a responsible report, and which can claim to have any permanent value even in the history of that particular subject. I venture to suggest that it would be impossible to compile from the entire utterances of the Scottish representation at Westminster during the period in question even the slimmest of volumes which would be a valuable addition to the library of any serious student of Scotland. There are grave *lacunae* in our national documentation—an urgent need for books on a large range of Scottish political, economic, and social matters—but not the most meagre contribution towards making up any of these gaps is to be culled from the columns of Hansard or the newspaper reports of our M.P.s' speeches or any of their occasional excursions into journalism or authorship. This is the measure of the unreality of their whole position.

It is, in fact, impossible to imagine a "Political History of Scotland 1908-1935"; and I do not believe that any of our M.P.s or political "workers", or electors could give a summary of what such a book should contain. All of them simply deal with such Scottish matters as arise in a "hand to mouth" manner. It is, at all events, a serious reflection on Scottish politics and on Scottish politicians and publicists of all sorts that there is no such book. Books of that type abound in relation to the affairs of every other

civilized country. In Scotland there is no evidence anywhere of guidance through the maze. At most instead of any consecutive and comprehensive conception of what the course of our affairs has been during that period there are only occasional pot-shots at it—a jumpy illumination touches now upon this, now upon that detail. All is haphazard, methodless, partial. It would seem that Scottish affairs are the prerogative of mere accident so far as the shedding of any light on them is concerned. In any case, if my contentions are challenged, let any one tell me where these balanced statements, these careful, competent, and weighed discussions and conclusions, these co-ordinated surveys, these intellectually-more-than-negligible accounts, with the analyses of statistics and the other accessories of scientific study, are to be found. I have sought in vain for them high and low. There is no other country in the world in respect of which I would have been at a moment's loss for such material; I am a competent and experienced journalist, contributing regularly to leading reviews and journals, and knowing all the tricks of the trade, but I could post myself very quickly in regard to the outs-and-ins of complex questions referring to Poland, Cochin China, or Paraguay quicker than I could in regard to the vast majority of Scottish issues, and with regard to the most vital and intricate of Scottish issues there is no information to be had—the facts and figures are not to be disentangled from the lump returns which submerge those relating to Scotland to those relating to the United Kingdom as a whole. I repeat therefore—and I am not to be confuted unless literature or utterances of the kind indicated can be produced to show that I am wrong—that there has been and is little or no serious political work or thought in relation to Scotland and that the whole mechanism of party-politics of which the Scottish representation at Westminster is a part operates in a way that in relation to what ought to be the realities of Scottish politics is entirely arbitrary and artificial. Whatever our politicians may be they are not Scottish politicians; Scottish politics have still to be created or an effective substitute found in relation to them for what all other countries still apparently need and call politics, and in lieu of which Scotland so far only has foisted upon it an alien farce and fraud.

But I would go a little further. Our politicians have

not only participated in and perpetuated the foisting upon us of that alien farce and fraud, but even if it is assumed that they themselves do not so regard it—even if it is assumed that they take all these egregious ongoings and irrelevant preoccupations of theirs *au serieux*—they have submitted time after time to treatment which even under the "rules of the game" is dishonouring and intolerable. They have seen representations made by those with local knowledge and the mandate of relevant public opinion overturned by a Parliamentary majority who knew nothing of the matters in question and did not even pretend to. They have time after time seen the interests of their constituents cynically and openly betrayed to the rival interests of the English Parliamentary majority. They have time after time seen Scottish affairs treated as a laughing-stock—or denied consideration at all—or "steam-rollered" by entirely inapposite English legislation. They have time after time seen the safeguarding clauses of the Act of Union unscrupulously and flagrantly violated. They have seen the Scottish legal system subverted by the English. There is no ignominy, no dishonour, no situation of contemptible futility, to which they have not submitted; to which they do not habitually submit as in the very nature of Scottish representation at Westminster. What induces them to do anything of the sort? What enables them to tolerate this impotence? Why have they never returned to their constituents and told them frankly that they were unable to represent them fairly and effectively in such an Assembly—as, Heaven knows, the circumstances of Scotland *vis-à-vis* England show only too well is the case? If the Scottish representation had ever had a spark of national pride or a sense of self-respect they could not have hesitated—and the Scottish electorate would have supported them to a man in ending a humiliating and ruinous connection procured by fraud and corruption, and continued on the one side by similar means and on the other by an appalling acquiescence.

The most extraordinary example of all this was the way in which the Scottish socialists with not only a majority of the Scottish seats in Westminster but a majority of the total Scottish poll allowed their mandate—the majority will of the Scottish people—to be vetoed by an English majority

of a reactionary character. If there had ever been any substance in their repeated declarations in favour of Scottish Home Rule—any real desire, and sense of opportunity, to promote anti-Imperialism—any urgent wish to apply the social reforms they advocated on behalf of the people they represented, that was their opportunity. If the Scottish Socialist M.P.s had shaken the dust of the House of Commons off their shoes then and returned to Scotland and stated the case in these terms, the overwhelming majority of the Scottish electorate would have supported them; a Scottish Socialist Republic would have been an immediate *fait accompli;* and under President Wheatley (one of the ablest men we have ever possessed—and the only Scottish Socialist M.P. to be "in on" and converted to Douglasism) or President Maxton, the English Ascendancy could have been speedily reduced to its "right little, tight little" dimensions and there would have been a quick succession of internal, Imperial, and International adjustments which would have done more for Socialism than they were ever in the remotest contingency—and are now certain never at all—to accomplish via the House of Commons. But that is Scottish politicians all over; futilitarians, openers of bazaars and star turns at Bands of Hope and Pleasant Sunday Afternoons.

Let me end with a little joke. In this year's by-election at Kilmarnock, commenting on the emergence of a Scottish Home Rule candidate in the person of Sir Alexander MacEwan, the Rev. James Barr, the Labour candidate, said that this would at least draw attention to his (Mr. Barr's) life-long advocacy of Scottish Home Rule. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald might well have capped that by declaring that the I.L.P. candidature of Mr. Pollok in opposition to the National Government candidate would at least draw attention to his (Mr. MacDonald's) life-long advocacy of the Socialist cause.

Yes! That's Scottish politicians of all sorts for you—including "King John", and Vice-President Oliver Brown and Chancellor McNicol and all the rest of the Nationalist gang who are only putting forward the same old bag of tricks with a new label on it.

Ugh!

What cannot be gainsaid is that Governments may have come and gone and the proportions of the respective

parties in the Scottish representation at Westminster changed as they liked, but the circumstances of Scotland have gone steadily from bad to worse—no single Scottish politician has rendered any substantive service worth speaking about of any kind at all to Scotland—and its most crucial problems have seldom been mentioned in the House of Commons and scarcely more frequently in the political speeches made in Scottish constituencies or in the columns devoted to political matters in the Scottish newspapers, while the Scottish electors themselves seem incapable of recognizing the omission or giving their vital interests any real consideration themselves so completely dominated are they by this weird and ubiquitous mechanism of pseudo-politics subserving the inscrutable policy of the unknown money monopolists, the planned end or incorrigible bias of which seems to be to treat the whole of Scotland ere long as St. Kilda has been treated with the exception of the chain of developments on the West Coast (referred to elsewhere in this book) which may require the retention in suitable compounds in Scotland itself of the personnel of a skeleton staffing—, or may not. Ultimately even that may be mechanically operated by pressing a button in Birmingham or Brighton.

§ 5.

NEWSREEL

A RECENT visit to the Granite City showed that Aberdeen dancers are improving. Another challenge to Glasgow's supremacy?

The Weekly Scotsman.

Will Mr. M'Connach arrange that, for the fraction of a second at least, the pedestrian will be given a fighting chance of getting from one side of the main street of Aberdeen to the other without feeling that he is a worm of earth, liable to be knocked down and squelched into a nasty mess without even a moment's notice?

Aberdeen Bon-Accord.

Mearns Bairns' Ain Corner. Our Motto—Scatter them abroad—The kindly word; the smile; the friendly gesture.

Mearns Leader.

The Lord Advocate's was a position any man might be proud to hold. He had the great question of justice in his hands. Lady Leslie Mackenzie in *The Scotsman.*

When the Duke of Atholl was approached last night he declined to say exactly how the lucky 748 ticket holders had been chosen. "It was," he said, "an idea from Heaven."

The Scotsman.

If the Scots had handed down their national spirit to their descendants instead of their national drink no flag bearing the Cross of St. George would be allowed to fly over Scottish soil on Bannockburn Day.

Correspondent in *Glasgow Daily Record.*

The Highland people are at the present moment near the parting of the ways between their past somnambulism and the active life of modern civilisation. The past consisted of dreams and a fatuous endeavour to put "wrongs" right by Act of Parliament, but the future promises much prosperity in virtue of industrial and trading enterprises.

The Weekly Scotsman.

On a Home Rule issue in the capital of Scotland the discourse is preached to large numbers of the converted. The economic conditions in some parts of industrial Scotland are deplorable. There are about one-fourth of the able-bodied population of our greatest commercial city unemployed. The terrible conditions have roused people to wonder whether a Scottish Parliament would not mend the sad state of affairs. At any rate the idea is generally accepted that too much of Scotland's money is going South to English administrators and business enterprises, and that Scotland is over-taxed. *Edinburgh Evening News.*

Whether you have toothache, bad roads, or bad weather, the remedy is a Scottish Parliament.

Lochiel in *The Scotsman.*

The Highland Land League came to speedy grief when it adopted Gladstone's Newcastle programme. Up to then it was undivided and strong, but it could not stand a dose

of English politics and succumbed to its effects in a few months.

Angus Henderson in the *Scots Observer.*

When I was Lord Provost of Glasgow a Water Bill was promoted in connection with Loch Katrine. The House of Commons granted the Bill but the Lords threw it out. The cost of that Bill was £1,250,000. Had the proceedings been heard in Edinburgh, the cost at the very maximum would have been £25,000.

Sir D. M. Stevenson, Bt., in *The Scotsman.*

One of the most remarkable developments in Parliamentary history is that Scotland secured a night of the debate on the Address. Ireland has frequently blocked the way in the Commons, but a challenge is now coming from Scotland. It is a challenge that has substance in it. Scotland is being accused of ingratitude. Is she not a lucky foundling in England's beautiful home? Has not England taken from Scotland Kings, Prime Ministers, Archbishops, Captains of Industry, and other personalities who go to make up a high-class civilization? Has not enough proof been given of Dr. Johnson's gibe that "the noblest prospect which a Scotsman ever sees is the high road that leads him to England"? Despite the spoiling of England by hungry and adventurous Scots, the people of the Northland are not happy, and those who remain there are anxious to govern themselves. No wonder our old friend Sir Robert Horne is in tears over such base ingratitude!

Edinburgh Evening News.

SECTION THE SIXTH

§ 1. Poems — Hugh MacDiarmid

SIX LYRICS

I. WITH THE HERRING FISHERS

"I see herrin' "—I hear the glad cry
And 'gainst the mune see ilka blue jowl
In turn as the fishermen haul on the nets
And sing: "Come, shove in your heids and growl."

"Soom on, bonnie herrin', soom on," they bawl,
And "Come in, O come in, and see me,"
"Come and gi'e the auld man something to dae;
It'll be a braw change frae the sea!"

O it's ane o' the bonniest sichts in the world
To watch the herrin' come walkin' on board
In the wee sma' 'oors o' a simmer's mornin'
As if o' their ain accord!

For this is the way that God sees life,
The haill jing-bang o's appearin'
Up owre frae the edge o' naethingness
——It's His happy cries I'm hearin'.

Left, Right——O come in and see me,"
Reid and yellow and black and white,
Toddlin' up into Heaven thegither
At peep o' day frae the endless night!

II. THE BONXIE

I'll be the Bonxie, that noble Scua,
That infects a' ither birds wi' its qualms.
In its presence even the eagle
Forbears to pounce on the lambs.

For it fechts wi' nocht less than itsel'
And prefers to encoonter great odds.
Guidbye to mankind! Henceforth I'll engage
Only angels, archangels, devils, and gods!

III. A DAUGHTER OF THE SEA

A wumman cam' up frae the blae deeps o' the sea
And "I'm Jeannie MacQueen," she said, lauchin' to me.

But it's "Gi' way wi' your oyster shine, lassie, gi' way"
—For she'd a different colour in the nail o' each tae!

IV. ONE THING SURE

No matter how science develops, my dear,
One thing is perfectly sure.
Most joy will still come from forgetting it all,
Sweet nothings will always endure.

Let wisdom increase a million fold;
Lads and lassies will still, it is clear,
Make fools of themselves as we do and know
It's only then that they don't, my dear.

The cleverer I am, the wider my view,
Of Past, Present, and Future, the more
I'll rejoice to give it the slip and be
All in all with you as of yore.

V. THE PRIME MOVER

Go map the currents of the seas,
The courses of the stars, my friend,
But I know movements that have thrilled
Mankind from the first and will to the end.

No mazy evolutions these,
Though but for them we'd know of none;
The most entrancing sight on Earth
——The first toddlings of a little one.

They matter most; the rest depend
On them for value and for being.
Who, blind to them, sees anything else
Has no conception of what he's seeing.

VI. FLY DOWN, EAGLE - - -

Come doon, eagle; come doon, sun!
Licht upon my sheckle bane.
Tell me hoo to gar the black
Shadows frae my sang begane!

Flee back, eagle; flee back, sun.
There's naething you can tell.
A' my woes are human anes
That I maun solve mysel'!

And ithers blacker still maun come
Nae suner that is done
Tho' each in turn may syne ootsoar
The eagle and ootshine the sun.

§ 2. SHORT STORY — LEWIS GRASSIC GIBBON

CLAY

THE Galts were so thick on the land around Segget folk said if you went for a walk at night and you trod on some thing and it gave a squiggle, it was ten to one you would find it a Galt. And if you were a newcomer up in the Howe and you stopped a man and asked him the way the chances were he'd be one of the brood. Like as not, before he had finished with you, he'd have sold you a horse or else stolen your watch, found out everything that you ever had done, recognized your mother and had doubts of your father. Syne off home he'd go and spread the news round from Galt of Catcraig that lay high in the hills to Galt of Drumbogs that lay low by Mondynes, all your doings were known and what you had said, what you wore next your skin, what you had to your breakfast, what you whispered to your wife in the dead of night. And the Galts would snigger *Ay, gentry, no doubt,* and spit in the vulgar way that they had: the average Galt knew less of politeness than a broody hen knows of Bible exegesis.

They farmed here and they farmed there, brothers and cousins and half-brothers and uncles, your head would reel as you tried to make out if Sarah were daughter to Ake of

Catcraig or only a relation through marrying a nephew of Sim of High Rigs that was cousin to Will. But the Galts knew all their relationships fine, more especially if anything had gone a bit wrong, they'd tell you how twenty-five years or so back when the daughter of Redleaf had married her cousin, old Alec that now was the farmer of Kirn, the first bit bairn that came of that marriage—ay, faith, that bairn had come unco soon! And they'd lick at their chops as they minded of that and sneer at each other and fair have a time. But if you were strange and would chance to agree, they'd close up quick, with a look on their faces as much as to say *And who are you would say ill of the Galts?*

They made silver like dirt wherever they sat, there was hardly a toun that they sat in for long. So soon's they moved in to some fresh bit farm they'd rive up the earth, manure it with fish, work the land to death in the space of their lease, syne flit to the other side of the Howe with the land left dry as a rat-sucked swede. And often enough as he neared his lease-end a Galt would break and be rouped from his place, he'd say that farming was just infernal and his wife would weep as she watched her bit things sold here and there to cover their debts. And if you didn't know much of the Galts you would be right sorry and would bid fell high. Syne you'd hear in less than a six months' time that the childe that went broke had bought a new farm and had stocked it up to the hilt with the silver he'd laid cannily by before he went broke.

Well, the best of the bunch was Rob Galt of Drumbogs, lightsome and hearty, not mean like the rest, he'd worked for nearly a twenty-five years as his father's foreman up at Drumbogs. Old Galt, the father, seemed nearly immortal, the older he grew the coarser he was, Rob stuck the brute as a good son should though aye he had wanted land of his own. When they fell out at last Rob Galt gave a laugh *You can keep Drumbogs and all things that are on it, I'll soon get a place of my own, old man.* His father sneered *You?* and Rob Galt said *Ay, a place of my own and parks that are MINE.*

He was lanky and long like all of the Galts, his mouser twisted up at the ends, with a chinny Galt face and a long, thin nose, and eyes pale-blue in a red-weathered face, a fine, frank childe that was kindness itself, though his notion of taking a rest from the plough was to loosen his

horses and start in to harrow. He didn't look long for a toun of his own, Pittaulds by Segget he leased in a wink, it stood high up on the edge of the Mounth, you could see the clutter of Segget below, wet, with the glint of its roofs at dawn. The rent was low, for the land was coarse, red clay that sucked with a hungry mouth at your feet as you passed through the evening fields.

Well, he moved to Pittaulds in the autumn term, folk watched his flitting come down by Mondynes and turn at the corner and trudge up the brae to the big house poised on the edge of the hill. He brought his wife, she was long as himself, with a dark-like face, quiet, as though gentry—faith, that was funny, a Galt wedded decent! But he fair was fond of the creature, folk said, queer in a man with a wife that had managed to bring but one bairn into the world. That bairn was now near a twelve years old, dark, like her mother, solemn and slim, Rob spoiled them both, the wife and the quean, you'd have thought them sugar he was feared would melt.

But they'd hardly sat down a week in Pittaulds when Rachel that would trot at the rear of Rob, like a collie dog, saw a queer-like change. Now and then her father would give her a pat and she'd think that he was to play as of old. But instead he would cry *Losh, run to the house, and see if your mother will let you come out, we've two loads of turnips to pull afore dinner.* Rachel, the quean, would chirp *Ay, father,* and go blithe to the shed for her tailer and his, and out they would wade through the cling of the clay and pull side by side down the long, swede rows, the rain in a drifting seep from the hills, below them the Howe in its garment of mist. And the little, dark quean would work by his side, say never a word though she fair was soaked; and at last go home; and her mother would stare, whatever in the world had happened to Rob? She would ask him that as he came into dinner—*the quean'll fair have her death of cold.* He would blink with his pale-blue eyes, impatient, *Hoots, lassie, she'll take no harm from the rain. And we fair must clear the swedes from the land, I'm a good three weeks behind with the work.*

The best of the Galts? Then God keep off the rest! For, as that year wore on to its winter, while he'd rise at five, as most other folk did, he wouldn't be into his bed till near morning, it was chave, chave, chave till at last you

would think he'd turn himself into an earthworm, near. In the blink of the light from the lanterns of dawn he would snap short-tempered at his dark-faced wife, she would stare and wonder and give a bit laugh, and eat up his porridge as though he was feared he would lose his appetite halfway through, and muck out the byre and the stable as fast as though he were paid for the job by the hour, with a scowl of ill-nature behind his long nose. And then, while the dark still lay on the land, and through the low mist that slept on the fields not a bird was cheeping and not a thing showing but the waving lanterns in the Segget wynds, he'd harness his horses and lead out the first, its hooves striking fire from the stones of the close, and cry to the second, and it would come after, and the two of them drink at the trough while Rob would button up his collar against the sharp drive of the frozen dew as the north wind woke. Then he'd jump on the back of the meikle roan, Jim, and go swaying and jangling down by the hedge, in the dark, the world on the morning's edge, wet, the smell of the parks in his face, the squelch of the horses soft in the clay.

Syne, as the light came grey in a tide, wan and slow from the Bervie Braes, and a hare would scuttle away through the grass and the peesies waken and cry and wheep, Rob Galt would jump from the back of Jim and back the pair up against the plough and unloose the chains from the horses' britchens and hook them up to the swivel-trees. Then he'd spit on his hands and cry *Wissh, Jim!* no longer ill-natured, but high-out and pleased, and swink the plough into the red, soaked land; and the horses would strain and snort and move canny and the clay wheel back in the coulter's trace, Rob swaying slow in the rear of the plough, one foot in the drill and one on the rig. The bothy billies on Arbuthnott's bents riding their pairs to start on some park would cry one to the other *Ay, Rob's on the go,* seeing him then as the light grew strong, wheeling, him and his horses and plough, a ranging of dots on the park that sloped its long clay rigs to the edge of the moor.

By eight, as Rachel set out for school, a slim, dark thing with her well-tackèd boots, she would hear the whistle of her father, Rob, deep, a wheeber, upon the hill; and she'd see him come swinging to the end of a rig and mind

how he once would stop and would joke and tease her for lads that she had at the school. And she'd cry *Hello father!* but Rob would say nothing till he'd drawn his horse out and looked back at the rig and given his mouser a twist and a wipe. Syne he'd peck at his daughter as though he'd new woke *Ay, then, so you're off,* and cry *Wissh!* to his horses and turn them about and set to again, while Rachel went on, quiet, with the wonder clouding her face that had altered so since she came to Pittaulds.

He'd the place all ploughed ere December was out, folk said that he'd follow the usual Galt course, he'd showed up mean as the rest of them did, he'd be off to the marts and a dealing in horses, or a buying of this or a stealing of that, if there were silver in the selling of frogs the Galts would puddock-hunt in their parks. But instead he began on the daftest-like ploy, between the hill of Pittaulds and the house a stretch of the moor thrust in a thin tongue, three or four acre, deep-pitted with holes and as rank with whins as a haddock with scales, not a tenant yet who had farmed Pittaulds but had had the sense to leave it a-be. But Rob Galt set in to break up the land, he said it fair cried to have a man at it, he carted great stones to fill up the holes and would lever out the roots when he could with a pick, when he couldn't he'd bring out his horses and yoke them and tear them out from the ground that way. Working that Spring to break in the moor by April's end he was all behind, folk took a laugh, it served the fool fine.

Once in a blue moon or so he'd come round, he fair was a deave as he sat by your fire, he and your man would start in on the crops and the lie of the land and how you should drain it, the best kind of turnips to plant in the clay, the manure that would bring the best yield a dry year. Your man would be keen enough on all that, but not like Rob Galt, he would kittle up daft and start in to tell you tales of the land that were just plain stite, of this park and that as though they were women you'd to prig and to pat afore they'd come on. And your man would go ganting wide as a gate and the clock would be hirpling the hours on to morn and still Rob Galt would sit here and habber. *Man, she's fairly a bitch, is that park, sly and sleekèd, you can feel it as soon as you start in on her, she'll take corn with the meikle husk, not with the little. But I'll kittle her up with some phosphate, I think.* Your man would say *Ay,*

well, well, is that so? What do you think of this business of Tariffs? and Rob would say *Well, man, I just couldn't say. What worries me's the park where I've put in the tares. It's fair on the sulk about something or other.*

And what could you think of a tool like that? Though he'd fallen behind with his chave on the moor he soon made it up with his working at night, he fair had a fine bit crop the next year, the wife and the quean both out at the cutting, binding and stooking as he reapered the fields. Rachel had shot up all of a sudden, you looked at her in a kind of surprise as you saw the creature go by to the school. It was said that she fair was a scholar, the quean—no better than your own bit Johnnie, you knew, the teachers were coarse to your Johnnie, the tinks. Well, Rachel brought home to Pittaulds some news the night that Rob came back from the mart, he'd sold his corn at a fair bit price. For once he had finished pleitering outside, he sat in the kitchen, his feet to the fire, puffing at his pipe, his eye on the window watching the ley rise up outside and peer in the house as though looking for him. It was Rachel thought that as she sat at her supper, dark, quiet, a bit queer, over thin to be bonny, you like a lass with a good bit of beef. Well, she finished her meat and syne started to tell the message the Dominie had sent her home with; and maybe if she was sent to the college she'd win a bursary or something to help.

Her mother said *Well, Rob, what say you to that?* and Rob asked *What?* and they told him again and Rob skeughed his face round *What, money for school? And where do you think that I'll manage to get that?*

Mrs. Galt said *Out of the corn you've just sold,* and Rob gave a laugh as though speaking to a daftie—*I've my seed to get and my drains to dig and what about the ley for the next year's corn? Damn't, it's just crying aloud for manure, it'll hardly leave me a penny-piece over.*

Rachel sat still and looked out at the ley, sitting so still, with her face in the dark. Then they heard her sniff and Rob swung round fair astonished at the sound she made. *What ails you?* he asked, and her mother said *Ails her? You would greet yourself if you saw your life ruined.* Rob got to his feet and gave Rachel a pat. *Well, well, I'm right sorry that you're taking't like that. But losh, it's a small bit thing to greet over. Come out and we'll go for a walk round the parks.*

So Rachel went with him half-hoping he thought to change his mind on this business of college. But all that he did on the walk was to stand now and then and stare at the flow of the stubble or laugh queer-like as they came to a patch where the grass was bare and the crop had failed. *Ay, see that, Rachel, the wretch wouldn't take. She'll want a deep drill, this park, the next season.* And he bent down and picked up a handful of earth and trickled the stuff through his fingers, slow, then dusted it back on the park, not the path, careful, as though it were gold-dust not dirt. So they came at last to the moor he had broken, he smoked his pipe and he stood and looked at it *Ay, quean, I've got you in fettle at last.* He was speaking to the park not his daughter but Rachel hated Pittaulds from that moment, she thought, quiet, watching her father and thinking how much he'd changed since he first set foot on its clay.

He worked from dawn until dark, and still later, he hove great harvests out of the land, he was mean as dirt with the silver he made; but in five years' time of his farming there he'd but hardly a penny he could call his own. Every meck that he got from the crops of one year seemed to cry to go back to the crops of the next. The coarse bit moor that lay north of the biggings he coddled as though 'twas his own blood and bone, he fed it manure and cross-ploughed it twice-thrice, and would harrow it, tend it, and roll the damn thing till the Segget joke seemed more than a joke, that he'd take it to bed with him if he could. For all that his wife saw of him in hers he might well have done that, Mrs. Galt that was tall and dark and so quiet came to look at him queer as he came in by, you could hardly believe it still was the Rob that once wouldn't blush to call you his jewel, that had many a time said all he wanted on earth was a wife like he had and land of his own. But that was afore he had gotten the land.

One night she said as they sat at their meat *Rob, I've still that queer pain in my breast. I've had it for long and I doubt that it's worse. We'll need to send for the doctor, I think.* Rob said *Eh?* and gleyed at her dull *Well, well, that's fine. I'll need to be stepping, I must put in a two-three hours the night on the weeds that are coming so thick in the swedes, it's fair pestered with the dirt, that poor bit of park.* Mrs. Galt said *Rob, will you leave your parks, just for a minute, and consider me? I'm ill and I want a doctor at last.*

Late the next afternoon he set off for Stonehive and the light came low and the hours went by, Mrs. Galt saw nothing of her man or the doctor and near went daft with the worry and pain. But at last as it grew fell black on the fields she heard the step of Rob on the close and she ran out and cried *What's kept you so long?* and he said *What's that? Why, what but my work?* He'd come back and he'd seen his swedes waiting the hoe, so he'd got off his bike and held into the hoeing, what sense would there have been in wasting his time going up to the house to tell the news that the doctor wouldn't be till the morn?

Well, the doctor came in his long brown car, he cried to Rob as he hoed the swedes *I'll need you up at the house with me.* And Rob cried *Why? I've no time to waste.* But he got at last into the doctor's car and drove to the house and waited impatient; and the doctor came ben, and was stroking his lips; and he said *Well, Galt, I'm feared I've bad news. Your wife has a cancer in the breast, I think.*

She'd to take to her bed and was there a good month while Rob Galt worked the Pittaulds on his own. Syne she wrote a letter to her daughter Rachel that was fee'd in Segget, and Rachel came home. And she said, quiet, *Mother, has he never looked near you? I'll get the police on the beast for this,* she meant her own father that was out with the hay, through the windows she could see him scything a bout, hear the skirl of the stone as he'd whet the wet blade, the sun a still lowe on the drowsing Howe, the dying woman in the littered bed. But Mrs. Galt whispered *He just doesn't think, it's not that he's cruel, he's just mad on Pittaulds.*

But Rachel was nearly a woman by then, dark, with a temper that all the lads knew, and she hardly waited for her father to come home to tell him how much he might well be ashamed, he had nearly killed her mother with neglect, was he just a beast with no heart at all? But Rob hardly looked at the quean in his hurry *Hoots, lassie, your stomach's gone sour with the heat. Could I leave my parks to get covered with weeds?* And he gave her a pat, as to quieten a bairn, and ate up his dinner, all in a fash to be coling the hay. Rachel cried *Aren't you going to look in on mother?* and he said *Oh, ay,* and went ben in a hurry. *Well, lass, you'll be pleased that the hay's done fine.— Damn't, there's a cloud coming up from the sea!* And the

next that they saw he was out of the house staring at the cloud as at Judgment Day.

Mrs. Galt was dead ere September's end, on the day of the funeral as folk came up they met Rob Galt in his old cord breeks, with a hoe in his hand, and he said he'd been out loosening up the potato drills a wee bit. He changed to his black and he helped with his brothers to carry the coffin out to the hearse. There were three bit carriages, he got in the first, and the horses went jangling slow to the road. The folk in the carriage kept solemn and long-faced, they thought Rob the same because of his wife. But he suddenly woke *Damn't, man, but I've got it! It's LIME that I should have given the yavil. It's been greeting for the stuff, that park on the brae!*

Rachel took on the housekeeping at Pittaulds, sombre and slim, aye reading in books, she would stand of a winter night and listen to the suck and slob of the rain on the clay and hate the sound as she tried to hate Rob. And sometimes he'd say as they sat at their meat *What's wrong with you, lass, that you're glowering like that?* and the quean would look down, and remember her mother, while Rob rose cheery and went to his work.

And yet, as she told to one of the lads that came cycling up from Segget to see her, she just couldn't hate him, hard though she tried. There was something in him that tugged at herself, daft-like, a feeling with him that the fields mattered and mattered, nothing else at all. And the lad said *What, not even me, Rachel?* and she laughed and gave him that which he sought, but half-absent like, she thought little of lads.

Well, that winter Rob Galt made up his mind that he'd break in another bit stretch of the moor beyond the bit he already had broke, there the land rose steep in a birn of wee braes, folk told him he fair would be daft to break that, it was land had lain wild and unfed since the Flood. Rob Galt said *Maybe, but they're queer-like, those braes, as though some childe had once shored them tight up.* And he set to the trauchle as he'd done before, he'd come sweating in like a bull at night and Rachel would ask him *Why don't you rest?* and he'd stare at her dumbfounded a moment: *What, rest, and me with my new bit park? What would I do but get on with my work?*

And then, as the next day wore to its close, she heard him

crying her name outbye, and went through the close, and he waved from the moor. So she closed the door and went up by the track through the schlorich of the wet November moor, a windy day in the winter's nieve, the hills a-cower from the bite of the wind, the whins in that wind had a moan as they moved, not a day for a dog to be out you would say. But she found her father near tirred to the skin, he'd been heaving a great root up from its hold, *Come in by and look on this fairely, lass, I knew that some childe had once farmed up here.*

And Rachel looked at the hole in the clay and the chamber behind it, dim in the light, where there gleamed a rickle of stone-grey sticks, the bones of a man of antique time. Amid the bones was a litter of flints and a crumbling stick in the shape of a heuch.

She knew it as an eirde of olden time, an earth-house built by the early folk, Rob nodded, *Ay, he was more than that. Look at that heuch, it once scythed Pittaulds. Losh, lass, I'd have liked to have kenned that childe, what a crack together we'd have had on the crops!*

Well, that night Rob started to splutter and hoast, next morning was over stiff to move, fair clean amazed at his own condition. Rachel got a neighbour to go for the doctor, Rob had taken a cold while he stood and looked at the hole and the bones in the old-time grave. There was nothing in that and it fair was a shock when folk heard the news in a two-three days Rob Galt was dead of the cold he had ta'en. He'd worked all his go in the ground nought left to fight the black hoast that took hold of his lungs.

He'd said hardly a word, once whispered *The Ley!* the last hour as he lay and looked out at that park, red-white, with a tremor of its earthen face as the evening glow came over the Howe. Then he said to Rachel *You'll take on the land, you and some childe, I've a notion for that?* But she couldn't lie even to please him just then, she'd no fancy for either the land or a lad, she shook her head and Rob's gley grew dim.

When the doctor came in he found Rob dead, with his face to the wall and the blinds down-drawn. He asked the quean if she'd stay there alone, all the night with her father's corpse? She nodded *Oh, yes,* and watched him go, standing at the door as he drove off to Segget. Then she turned her about and went up through the parks, quiet,

in the wet, quiet gloaming's coming, up through the hill to the old earth-house.

There the wind came sudden in a gust in her hair as she looked at the place and the way she had come and thought of the things the minister would say when she told him she planned her father be buried up here by the bones of the man of old time. And she shivered sudden as she looked round about at the bare clay slopes that slept in the dusk, the whistle of the whins seemed to rise in a voice, the parks below to whisper and listen as the wind came up them out of the east.

All life—just clay that awoke and strove to return again to its mother's breast. And she thought of the men who had made these rigs and the windy days of their toil and years, the daftness of toil that had been Rob Galt's, that had been that of many men long on the land, though seldom seen now, was it good, was it bad? What power had that been that woke once on this brae and was gone at last from the parks of Pittaulds?

For she knew in that moment that no other would come to tend the ill rigs in the north wind's blow. This was finished and ended, a thing put by, and the whins and the broom creep down once again, and only the peesies wheep and be still when she'd gone to the life that was hers, that was different, and the earth turn sleeping, unquieted no longer, her hungry bairns in her hungry breast where sleep and death and the earth were one.

§ 3. Essay — Hugh MacDiarmid

THE SEA

Scotland is not wholly surrounded by the sea—unfortunately. Nevertheless it is all but an island and in addition to its main land mass comprises not only a host of single islands of all sorts and sizes but the archipelagoes of the Hebrides, the Orkneys, and the Shetlands. It stands to reason that seafaring and fisheries and allied industries have always played a very large and important part in the life of Scotland although they do not bulk in anything like due proportion in the general conception of Scotland nor are they at all adequately reflected in its literature. What is true of the Scottish mainland is even truer of these three

great exclaves. Little or nothing is popularly known of their island economies of crofting and fishing. The Hebrides enter into the general consciousness by way of a glamorous myth which has little or no relation to reality —so little indeed that the average Scotsman had no conception at all of the economic history, present conditions, and problems and potentialities of these islands. Indeed the vast majority could not name more than a few of them and I was amused a few years ago when my friend Compton Mackenzie bought the Shiant Isles to find how few supposedly well-educated Scots knew where they lay or had even heard of them before, a state of affairs paralleled, I found, by the general inability to understand what I meant by a line in one of my poems which deals with

"Fladda Chuain and the Ascrib Isles."

The Orkneys and the Shetlands are still further outside the common ken. Apart from a vague notion of their connection with the Viking period, they lack even any such popular myth as the Hebrides possess and have not begun to attract any considerable number of tourists. Their general background—racial, historical, and linguistic—is far more foreign and more Scots than the Gaelic background of the Hebrides, and their distinctive island routine is quite unknown. Almost the only "tag" that has entered into the popular mind concerning them is the distinction drawn (truly enough) between the Orkneys and the Shetlands—that the former are peopled with crofters who have boats, and the latter by fishermen who have crofts.

The distance that has to be traversed before Scotland effectively possesses itself of an understanding of the lives and conditions of life, traditions, and problems round its coasts may be gauged from the following passage in an account dealing with the Whalsay Regatta (Whalsay is one of the North Isles of the Shetland Group) a couple of years ago.

> "In those far-off days of '62," he wrote, contrasting the conditions of the past with those obtaining to-day, "when many could detect the presence of windy knots and wattery swirls, it is most probable that on regatta day, as each skipper, clad in his leather jubs and warm skins, took his place in the hurrik, he would glance with concern to see if the blugga-banes o' da halibut was

under the eft hinnie spot; then with his eye cocked on the learned upstander, who, no doubt, was then the only one acquainted with square root, he would pass the snuff horn and await the signal, soliloquising—'Guid haad His haand o'er wis and bring wis safe to da kaavies.' One can imagine the preparation beforehand; the kjoabs 'laid on'; the avoidance on regatta morn of an 'evil eye' or an 'ill fit'; and the attention that would be paid to brynncs or eestik heads and so on."

A much more usual line of approach in the following vignette of the charm of yachting on the West Coast in which Mr. Heckstall Smith describes an evening off Ballachulish: —

"The peace and beauty of that anchorage was beyond relief. The sun set over the Morven Hills in a glory of gold and red, and a deep mysterious purple gathered in the Pass of Glencoe. There came to us the call of the curlews, the 'frank, frank' of a heron, the whistle of a sand-piper, and the 'mieu, mieu' of a gull going to his rest, the splash of a fish, while somewhere on the shore we could hear the distant voice of sheep. Now and again the rhythmic sound of oars against the rowlocks, and the soft voice of our Highland pilot on the fo'castle talking to the men."

Mr. Heckstall Smith is an Englishman and appreciates the figure some of his countrymen cut when they come patronizing Northwards, as appears in his description of the Highland people: —

"They are a great race; they always have been a grand people; and, if modern times will let them, will remain so; a race of men and women which has survived the centuries in this Highland land, among barren hills and wild seas, of storms and raging winters, or famine and battle and murder, must of necessity be a hardy race; it is not a land where any but the fittest can survive year in, year out. One cannot have any feeling except of the deepest respect for such a people and I wish we Sassenachs, as a body, would remember these things when we visit, talk to, or write about our Highland hosts, for as such I regard them when we intrude on their territories."

But let us remember Pope's famous lines: —

> A little knowledge is a dangerous thing :
> Drink deep, or touch not, the Pierian spring :
> There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain
> But drinking deeply sobers us again.

Certainly while petty emotionalism may revel in glories of gold and deep mysterious purples, a little reflection on the real life round our coasts—on the derelict harbours and ruined fishing villages, on the wanton destruction of the old island economy, on the devastation wrought by English and other foreign trawlers, on the forced emigration and progressive depopulation of the Highlands and Islands, on the general lack of knowledge and certainly the extreme rarity of first-hand and detailed knowledge of the conditions of fishing and crofting life, or the fact that the hardships of the weather and a meagre living are nothing to the preventible hardships of Governmental oppression and neglect, and on the fact that other parts of Europe even less favourably circumstanced that the loneliest wastal stretches on any of the islands of Scotland and under far greater natural handicaps are able to maintain their traditional industry in a flourishing condition while ours is going steadily from bad to worse; must prove sobering enough to anyone who has the interests of Scotland at heart. Eighty years ago the Faroe Islands were in a desperately backward condition; they then learned cod-fishing from the Shetlands and gradually acquired a fleet of their own, and now have a prosperous and progressive industry—while the Shetlands have been reduced to a condition almost as deplorable as that of the Faroes eighty years ago. The Faroes enjoy practically complete autonomy; they are masters in their own house; practically the entire proceeds of their industry accrue to themselves. The intervention of foreign financiers and middlemen has been restricted to a minimum. The Faroese own their own fleet of fishing smacks, their drying plants, their export transport. Practically every man is in an independent position and owns his own house. There is no destitution, no unemployment, no emigration. The Faroes are an object lesson to the rest of Europe in the benefits of economic rationalism. It is only on such a basis that the economy of the Shetlands, the Hebrides, and of Scotland

generally can be reconstructed. The economic independence of the individual ought to be our objective, and there is nothing whatever to prevent us doing what the Faroes have done, given like energy and determination—qualities in which we have never been considered so conspicuously lacking as our present conditions would seem to suggest.

The secret of the Faroese success is very simple; it was expressed long ago in the admonition: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and all other things shall be added unto you". As the ship that carries on to the Faroes slowly makes up to the land, the eye picks out on the horizon the monstrous shapes of Zitla Dimun and Stora Dimun; and these are a foretaste of the incredible spectacles that follow —sterile pyramids rising to needle-points, sheer walls of basalt, fantastic ridges with razor edges, all the islands inlandly uninhabitable, all the habitations confined to a narrow strip round the nook-shotten coast. One feels as if one were not on the habitable earth but amongst the mountains of the moon. And this is the wilderness that blossoms like a rose—the stony rubbish that is the home of a people whose economic, cultural, and social life is a model for all "civilized" countries? Impossible! Not at all! These gaunt precipices on the horizon are natural phenomena; but everywhere else in Europe to-day it is unnatural phenomena that appeal and menace us, or, as Hausleiter puts it: "Abysses yawn . . . the habit of thinking in terms of money dissolves all culture in the fog of civilization. And the strangest of all spectres, the spectre that is its own double, 'hunger because of superfluity,' broods over the world."

That is the simple fact—the essential difference between the Faroes and the rest of Europe. As we make up to the Faroes, we are leaving that hellish spectre behind, and although the aspect of other European countries may be bland and propitious, green with trees and richly cultivated in comparison with the fearsome outlines of these remote islands, the reality is the other way round. Horror and despair stalk the fair fields of Europe; the stony acres of the Faroes shelter a soundly-based and happy population. The Shetlands, the Orkneys, the Hebrides, the coasts of Scotland generally, and even poor evacuated St. Kilda can —and will yet—do likewise. The activities of the Sea League may put an end to illegal trawling and have the

Minch and Moray Firth closed to trawlers, but the County Councils in the North of Scotland and the Fish Producers' Association have been striving for the same object and what is really surprising about the whole agitation is the incomprehensible patience of the fishermen—their continued faith in incurably alien and antipathetic forms of Government. Even if the above objects were secured, only the fringe of the problem of putting the Scottish coasts and islands on the basis of a proper economy would have been touched; the problem as a whole can only be envisaged as part and parcel of the problem of the future of Scotland. As Dr. Donald Buchanan has said: —and substantially the same thing applies to the Orkneys and the Shetlands: —

> "The basic conceptions underlying this problem are simple and conspicuous. The coast-line of the Islands of the Minch is the heritage of the people who have inhabited them for generations. To redeem that heritage the sustenance of these inhabitants should be insured. To subserve that sustenance we should aim, in the words of the poet, that 'every rood of land maintains its man'. I should supplement that by the observation, 'Let every mile of sea maintain its man'. Neither the sea nor the land harvest is adequate to maintain the population, but the one is the supplement of the other. The problem involves the preservation of a type of civilisation, culture, and language worth preserving. Ours is the last vestige of a peasantry in its ultimate sense."

It was something similar a distinguished literary critic, who recently visited the Orkneys and Shetlands, meant when he wrote to me:

> "These northern islands seem to me to be the only ones in Scotland that still have a real civilisation in the very bone, a civilisation that has never been spoiled and is perfectly harmonious in itself. They weren't half-and-half, like the rest of Scotland, the Highlands particularly, with their hopeless 'sporting interests' and their cowed money-getting; the rest of Scotland seemed to me an anti-climax after the Orkneys and Shetlands."

Let us turn to another phase of Scotland's relationships with the sea. Mr. William Power has written an admirable essay on "Scots and the Sea—The Un-maritime Celt." I think he is right when he contends that it is doubtful,

even had Scotland won at Flodden, whether she could have made good at sea as the Dutch were to do for a time.

> "The mass of the Scots people were not behind James IV's naval venture," he says. "It seemed to them exotic. Probably in the whole Scots fleet there was not a man of the old Scots race. Then, and for long after, the population of Scotland was thickest in the inland regions, where there were few people who had ever seen the sea. Curiously enough, it was the disaster of Flodden that drove the Scots to the sea, not as fighters but as traders. The Borders were ruined, inland trade had declined, and trade with England was cut off. Scotland sought compensation in trade with the Baltic; and her young men emigrated in thousands to Dantzig and Poland to earn their living. It was then that Glasgow tentatively began the shipping career that was to prove so notable, and Glasgow was the only big Scottish seaport in which the maritime impulse was purely Celtic. That is one of the many remarkable features of Clyde enterprise. Glasgow might flout Charlie and his men, but she could not make her own blood Teutonic. Glasgow, the world's greatest shipbuilding and marine engineering centre, is more Gaelic than Dublin. Thus do exceptions prove the rule."

Scotland has however contributed its full quota to the British Navy and many great sailors in the British and other navies have been Scots. And Scotland has never got back its fair share in the Navy which it has been equally taxed with England to maintain. England derives the advantage of having the Admiralty centralized in London and the great naval dockyards and training centres are all in England, while the provisioning of the fleet is allocated almost entirely to English firms. This is obviously a gross injustice and the indignation created in Scotland when Rosyth dockyard was abandoned ought to have been carried a great deal further. It contributed a first-class public scandal.

There is an erroneous idea that English sea-poetry is realistic whereas Gaelic sea-poetry is highly conventionalized and has so little relation to the actual facts that the very waves of the sea are arranged in a series of parallel curves which may be highly decorative but are far from

true to nature. A lack of familiarity with ancient Gaelic originals no doubt accounts for this misconception as it does for the general notion that the modern decadent "Celtic Twilight" stuff is true to the essential Gaelic genius, which, on the contrary, was hard, classical, realistic, and frequently sarcastic in quality. There is certainly nothing in English which can compare for graphic power, tremendous imaginative sweep, savage exultation in wild nautical scenes, and thorough technical knowledge with Alasdair MacMhaighistir Alasdair's "Birlinn of Clanranald," which is not only probably the greatest of all Scottish poems, but one of the greatest sea-poems in world-literature.

Scottish sea-poetry generally is more vivid and compelling and poignant in its realization of the human issues than English sea-poetry. Baroness Nairne's *Caller Herrin'* strikes the keynote; it is never forgotten that what is really involved is "lives o' men." Another typical note is struck in Mickle's "There's nae luck aboot the Hoose," when the goodman comes home: —

> " Rax me my cloak, I'll to the quay,
> And see him come ashore."

Then there is the old song: —

> " O weel may the boatie row
> And better may she speed !
> And weel the boatie row
> That wins the bairns' bread ! "

And life in an old Scots fishing town comes surging up in Burn's "I'll Gar Our Gudeman Trow,"

> " Sae stand about, ye fisher jauds,
> And gie my gown room."

Emigration and exile constitute another frequent *motif;* and the most famous of poems of this kind is *The Canadian Boat Song.* One of the greatest of Scottish sea-poems is the *Ballad of Sir Patrick Spens.* But even English poets—and the greatest of English poets—in dealing with the sea had to take Scotland into account. Thus, in Milton's *Lycidas,* we read:

> " Where'er thy bones are hurl'd,
> Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides
> Where thou perhaps, under the whelming tide,
> Visitest the bottom of the monstrous world."

And *Ye Mariners of England* was, of course, written by a Scottish poet.

If Scotland has never been a naval country, and if her shipbuilding, and trading, and fishing relations with the sea are seldom accorded their due importance in relation to her entire economy but are apt to be overshadowed by her land interests, it is, at all events, well to remember that but for Scotland other people would have known a great deal less about the sea than they do. The world owes its oceanography to Scotland. As Professor W. A. Herdman has said:

> "Oceanography is the science of the sea in all aspects and Edinburgh is the birthplace and the home of modern Oceanography. . . . The Historically connected work of these three great pioneers in Oceanography—Edward Forbes, the dredger of shallow waters; Wyville Thomson, the explorer of the deep seas; and John Murray, who may be regarded as the founder of modern post-'Challenger' Oceanography—demonstrates the effect of Edinburgh men and ideas and work in advancing our knowledge of the science of the sea. And younger Edinburgh men have carried on and are carrying on the tradition.

Forbes' work, which began in the Manx waters (though of Scottish descent he was born in the Isle of Man in 1815), spread from dredging in the Shetland Seas and round the British coasts through the Hebridean and Scandinavian seas to Mediterranean and the Aegean. About 1850 Forbes prepared his remarkable map of distribution of marine life over the oceans of the world, and of homoiozoic belts, which was probably the first attempt to divide the oceans into provinces on scientific grounds. He died in 1854—39 years of age.

> "It is reasonable to suppose," says Professor Herdman, "that had he lived he would have made Edinburgh the greatest centre of marine biological work in Europe. He was the most original, brilliant, and inspiring naturalist of his day, with a broad philosophic outlook over nature, and a capacity for investigating border-line problems involving several branches of science—he was in a word a pioneer of Oceanography and the spiritual ancestor of men like Sir Wyville Thomson and Sir John Murray."

Charles Wyville Thomson (1830-1882) was the next of the great trio. He was the chief originator of the famous circumnavigating expedition in H.M.S. "Challenger," 1872-1876.

"It has been said that the 'Challenger' Expedition will rank in history with the voyages of Vasco da Gama, Columbus, Magellan, and Cook. Like these it added new regions of the globe to our knowledge and the wide expanses thus opened up for the first time—the floors of the ocean—were vaster than the discoveries of any previous exploration."

Sir Ray Lankester said:

"Never did an expedition cost so little and produce such momentous results for human knowledge."

Murray, a Canadian Scot, who came to Scotland as a boy to complete his education; he accompanied Thomson on the "Challenger." Murray's studies of the nature and distribution of submarine deposits led to one of the romances of science—and a typically Scottish romance—for we read that he "discovered a valuable phosphatic deposit at Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean." He realized its economic as well as its scientific value, and was able to convince the Government that this uninhabited volcanic island would be of value to the nation. The results of his exploitation of this discovery have been highly successful on both the scientific and the commercial sides, and Murray was able to show after some years' working that the British Treasury had already received in royalties and taxes from the island considerably more than the total cost of the "Challenger Expedition." Sir John Murray's five great volumes are, as Professor Herdman declares, a monument to his memory. These, with the other "Challenger" reports which he edited, record collectively the greatest advance in the knowledge of our planet since the great geographical discoveries of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

It is characteristic of Scottish affairs, however, that Professor Herdman has to close his account of the history of Oceanography, by remarking:

"It may seem curious that Edinburgh, so favourably situated on the shores of the Firth of Forth and provided

with the succession of eminent naturalists who have filled the University Chair of Natural History since the days of Jameson, has never possessed a Marine Biological Station. Murray at least made the attempt to supply this want. Eventually in 1894, along with his friend Robert Irvine, he acquired the lease of an old sandstone quarry near Granton into which the sea had broken some thirty years before, leaving it as a land-locked sheet of sheltered deep water, which rose and fell with every tide. Here they moored a large canal barge upon which had been built a wooden house divided into chemical and biological laboratories, and called for obvious reasons, 'the Ark!' Eventually the 'Ark' was towed through the Forth and Clyde canal to Millport on the Cambrae, and there it was beached as an annex of the Millport Biological Station."

In his concluding sentences Professor Herdman refers to the "Scotia Expedition" (1902-4) of Dr. W. S. Bruce as

"a remakable example of what one man can do with the aid of private friends and a devoted staff of fellow-workers."

The shabbiness of the Government's attitude to that expedition—typical of its attitude to all Scottish undertakings—is still fresh in the public mind. Great as the contributions of Scottish scientists have been to many departments of knowledge they would have been far greater but for this niggardly treatment and denial of facilities, but, if Scotland had control of her own affairs, she would speedily solve her economic problems and be in a position to put all the necessary ways and means at the disposal of her sons of genius without consulting a selfish, envious and unsympathetic "predominant partner."

§ 4. Essay — Lewis Grassic Gibbon

THE LAND

1. *Winter*

I like the story of the helpful Englishman who, when shown a modern Scots Nationalist map with "Scotland Proper" stretching from John o' Groats to the Tweed, and "Scotia Irredenta" stretching from the Tweed to the

Mersey, suggested "Scotland Improper" in place of the latter term. The propriety of Northern England to rank as a section of Scotland may have political justice; it certainly has no æsthetic claim. If I look out on the land of Scotland and see it fouled by the smoking slag-heaps of industrialism rightwards and leftwards, a long trailing rift down the eastern coast and a vomiting geyser in Lanarkshire, I feel no stirrings of passion at all to add those tortured wastes of countryside, Northumbria and Lancashire, to the Scottish land. I like the grey glister of sleet in the dark this night, seen through the unblinded window; and I like this idle task of voyaging with a pen through the storm-happed wastes of Scotland in winter; but I balk at reaching beyond the Border, into that chill land of alien geology and deplorable methods of ploughing. This paraffin lamp set beside me on the table was lit for the benefit of myself and Scotland Proper: I shrink from geographical impropriety to-night as my Kailyard literary forerunners shrank from description of the bridal bed.

And now that I bend to the task and the logs are crackling so cheerfully and the wind has veered a point, and there's a fine whoom in the lum, it comes on me with a qualm that perhaps I have no qualifications for the task at all. For if the land is the enumeration of figures and statistics of the yield of wheat in the Merse or the Carse of Gowrie, fruit-harvesting in Coupar-Angus, or how they couple and breed their cattle in Ayrshire, I am quite lost. And if the land is the lilting of tourist names, Strathmore, Ben Lomond, Ben Macdhui, Rannoch, Loch Tay and the Sidlaw Hills, I confess to bored glimpses of this and that stretch of unique countryside, I confess that once (just such a night as this) I journeyed up to Oban; and the train was bogged in a snowstorm; and I spent shivering hours in view of Ben Cruachan; and once an Anglo-Gaelic novelist took me round Loch Lomond in his car and we drank good whisky and talked about Lenin; and an uncle once dragged me, protesting, up Lochnagar, in search of a sunrise that failed to appear—the sun hid that morning in a diffusion of peasoup fog; and I've viewed the Caledonian Canal with suitable commercial enthusiasm and recited (as a small boy at concerts) verse about the Dee and Don, they still run on (a phenomenon which elicited complacent clappings of commendation from my audiences); and I've eaten trout by

Loch Levenside. But I refuse the beetling crags and the spume of Spey; still I think they are not The Land.

That is The Land out there, under the sleet, churned and pelted there in the dark, the long rigs upturning their clayey faces to the spear-onset of the sleet. That is The Land, a dim vision this night of laggard fences and long stretching rigs. And the voice of it—the true and unforgettable voice—you can hear even such a night as this as the dark comes down, the immemorial plaint of the peewit, flying lost. *That* is The Land—though not quite all. Those folk in the byre whose lantern light is a glimmer through the sleet as they muck and bed and tend the kye, and milk the milk into tin pails, in curling froth—they are The Land in as great a measure. Those two, a dual power, are the protagonists in this little sketch. They are the essentials for the title. And besides, quite unfairly, they are all so intimately mine that I would give them that position though they had not a shadow of a claim to it.

I like to remember I am of peasant rearing and peasant stock. Good manners prevail on me not to insist on the fact over-much, not to boast in the company of those who come from manses and slums and castles and villas, the folk of the proletariat, the bigger and lesser bourgeoisies. But I am again and again, as I hear them talk of their origins and beginnings and begetters, conscious of an overweening pride that mine was thus and so, that the land was so closely and intimately mine (my mother used to hap me in a plaid in harvest-time and leave me in the lee of a stook while she harvested) that I feel of a strange and antique age in the company and converse of my adult peers—like an adult himself listening to the bright sayings and laughters of callow boys, parvenus on the human scene, while I, a good Venriconian Pict, harken from the shade of my sun circle and look away, bored, in pride of possession at my terraced crops, at the on-ding of rain and snow across my leavened fields. . . .

How much this is merely reaction from the hatreds of my youth I do not know. For once I had a very bitter detestation for all this life of the land and the folk upon it. My view was that of my distant cousin, Mr. Leslie Mitchell, writing in his novel *The Thirteenth Disciple:*

> "A grey, grey life. Dull and grey in its routine, Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter, that life the

Neolithic men brought from the south, supplanting Azilian hunger and hunting and light-hearted shiftlessness with servitude to seasons and soil and the tending of cattle. A beastly life. With memory of it and reading those Catholic writers, who, for some obscure reason, champion the peasant and his state as the ideal state, I am moved to unkindly mirth . . . unprintably sceptical as to Mr. Chesterton or his chelas ever having grubbed a livelihood from hungry acres of red clay, or regarding the land and its inhabitants with other vision than an obese Victorian astigmatism."

Not, I think, that I have gone the full circle and have returned among the romantics. As I listen to that sleet-drive I can see the wilting hay-ricks under the fall of the sleet and think of the wind ablow on ungarmented floors, ploughmen in sodden bothies on the farms outbye, old, bent and wrinkled people who have mislaid so much of fun and hope and high endeavour in grey servitude to those rigs curling away, only half-intimate, into the night. I can still think and see these things with great clarity though I sit in this warm room and write this pleasant essay and find pleasure in the manipulation of words on a blank page. But when I read or hear our new leaders and their plans for making of Scotland a great peasant nation, a land of little farms and little farming communities, I am moved to a bored disgust with those pseudo-literary romantics playing with politics, those refugees from the warm parlours and lights and policemen and theatre-stalls of the Scots cities. They are promising the New Scotland a purgatory that would decimate it. They are promising it narrowness and bitterness and heart-breaking toil in one of the most unkindly agricultural lands in the world. They are promising to make of a young, ricketic man, with the phthisis of Glasgow in his throat, a bewildered labourer in pelting rains and the flares of head-aching suns, they are promising him years of a murderous monotony,, poverty and struggle and loss of happy human relationships. They promise that of which they know nothing, except through sipping of the scum of Kailyard romance.

For this life is for no modern man or woman—even the finest of these. It belongs to a different, an alien generation. That winter that is sweeping up the Howe, bending the

whins on Auchindreich hill, seeping with pelting blasts through the old walls of Edzell Castle, malagarousing the ploughed lands and swashing about and above the heavy cattle-courts where in darkness the great herds lie cud-chewing and breath-blowing in frosty steam, is a thing for most to be stared at, tourist-wise, endured for a day or a week. This night, the winter on the countryside, the crofter may doze contentedly in the arm-chair in the ingle-neuk and the mistress yawn with an equal content at the clock. For you or I or young Simon who is taking his girl to the pictures it is as alien and unendurable in permanence as the life of the Kamtchatkan.

II. *Spring*

Going down the rigs this morning, my head full of that unaccustomed smell of the earth, fresh and salty and anciently mouldy, I remembered the psalmist's voice of the turtle and instinctively listened for its Scots equivalent—that far cooing of pigeons that used to greet the coming of Spring mornings when I was a boy. But the woods have gone, their green encirclement replaced by swathes of bog and muck and rank-growing heath, all the land about here is left bare in the North wind's blow. The pigeons have gone and the rabbits and like vermin multiplied—unhappy land to no profit, for the farmers tell me the rabbits are tuberculous, dangerous meat. Unshielded by the woods, the farm-lands are assailed by enemies my youth never knew.

But they are fewer and fewer, the cultivated lands. Half of them are in grass—permanently in grass—and browsed upon by great flocks of sheep, leaving that spider-trail of grey that sheep bring to pastures. We are repeating here what the Borderers did in Badenoch and the Highlands—eating away the land and the crofter, killing off the peasant as surely as in Russia—and with no Russian compensation. If the little dykes and the sodden ditches that rivuleted in the Springs of bygone times with the waters hastening to the Forthie—the ditches that separated this little farm from that—were filled and obliterated by a sovkholz with tractors and high enthusiasm and a great and tremendous agricultural hope, I at least could turn to the hills and the heath—that other and older Land—with no more regret than the sensitive felt in the passing of the

windjammers and the coming of the steamboats. But instead there has come here only a brainless greed, a grabbing stupidity, the mean avariciousness and planlessness of our community in epitome. I do not wonder that the rabbits are tuberculous: the wonder is that they are not jaundiced as well.

It was then that I thought what a fine and heartsome smell has rank cow-dung as the childe with the gaip hurls it steady heap on heap from the rear of his gurling cart. They sell stuff in Paris in little bottles with just that smell, and charge for it hansomely, as they may well do, for it is the smell that backgrounds existence. And then (having come to the end of the rig and looked at the rabbit-snare and found it empty and found also a stone whereon to sit) I fell into another meditation: this dung that backgrounded existence, this Autumn's crops, meal for the folk of the cities, good heartsome barley alcohol—would never be spread, never be seeded, never ground to bree, but for the aristocracy of the earth, the ploughmen and the peasants. These are the real rulers of Scotland: they are the rulers of the earth!

And how patient and genial and ingenuously foul-mouthed and dourly wary and kindly they are, those selfless aristos of Scotland. They endure a life of mean and bitter poverty, an order sneered upon by the little folk of the towns, their gait is a mockery in city streets, you see little waitresses stare haughtily at their great red, sun-creased hands, plump professors in spectacles and pimples enunciate theses on their mortality and morality, their habits of breeding and their shiftlessness—and they endure it all! They endure the chatter of the city salons, the plannings of this and that war and blockade, they endure the pretensions of every social class but their own to be the mainspring and base of human society—they, the masters, who feed the world! . . . And it came on me that all over Great Britain, all over Europe this morning, the mean fields of France and fat pastures of Saxony and the rolling lands of Roumania those rulers of the earth were out and about, bent-backed at plodding toil, the world's great Green International awaiting the coming of its Spartacus.

There are gulls in from the sea this morning, wheeling in comet tails at the heels of this and that ploughman, a dotting of signatures against the dark green of the Bervie braes.

Here the land is red clay, sour and dour, but south, by Brechin, you come to that rich loam that even here erupts in sudden patches and brings tall corn while the surrounding fields wilt in the baking clay. The clay is good for potatoes in the dry years, however—those dry years that come every decade or so for no reason that we know of here in the Howe, for we are beyond the "mountain-shadow" that makes of Donside and Braemar the tourist's camping-ground. . . .

In the sunlight, down by Kinneff, the fog-horn has begun its wail, the sun has drawn great banks of mist out of the North Sea and now they are billowing over Auchendreich like the soft, coloured spume from a washing-tub. But leftwards the sun is a bright, steely glare on the ridged humps of the Grampians, hastening south into the coming of Summer, crowned with snow in their upper haughs—much the same mountains, I suppose, as the Maglemosians looked on that Spring day in the youth of the world and the youth of Scotland when they crossed the low lands of the Dogger Bank and clambered up the rocks of Kinneff into a still and untenanted Scotland. The great bear watched them come, and the eagle from his Grampian eyrie and scattering packs of wolves on the forest fringes saw that migration of the hunters seven thousand years ago. They came over Auchendreich there, through the whins and heath, and halted and stared at the billowing Howe, and laughed and muttered and squatted and stared—dark men, and tall, without gods or kings, classes or culture, writers or artists, free and happy, and all the world theirs. Scotland woke and looked at them from a hundred peaks and stared a shy virgin's amaze.

All winter the cattle were kept to the byres. This morning saw their first deliverance—cows and stirks and stots and calves they grumphed and galumphed from the byre to the park and squattered an astounded delight in the mud, and boxed at each other, and stared a bovine surprise at the world, and went mad with delight and raced round the park, and stood still and mooed: they mooed on a long, devilish note the whole lot of them, for nearly two minutes on end and for no reason at all but delight in hearing their own moo. They are all of mixed breed, except one, a small Jersey cow of southron coldness, who drops her aitches, haughtily, and also her calves. The strains are

mostly shorthorn, with a dash of Highland, I suspect: a hundred years of mixed pasturing and crop-rotation weeded out the experimental breeds and left these satisfying mongrels. Presently (after racing a grocer's cart for the length of the field and all but hamstringing themselves on the boundary fence) they abandoned playfulness and took to grazing, remembering their mission was to provide fat carcases for the slaughter-shed——

We balk from such notions, in Spring especially, in especial as the evening comes with that fresh smell all about it, impregnating it, the kind of evening that has growth and youngness and kindliness in its essence—balk from the thought of our strange, unthinking cruelties, the underpit of blood and suffering and intolerable horror on which the most innocent of us build our lives. I feel this evening that never again will I eat a dead animal (or, I find myself guarding the resolve with the inevitable flippancy, a live one). But that resolve will be gone to-morrow: the Horror is beyond personalism, very old and strange and terrible. Even those hunters all those millenia ago were eaters of flesh.

It is strange to think that, if events never die (as some of the wise have supposed,) but live existence all time in Eternity, back through the time-spirals, still alive and aware in that world seven thousand years ago, the hunters are *now* lying down their first night in Scotland, with their tall, deep-bosomed sinewy mates and their children, tired from trek. . . . Over in the west a long line of lights twinkles against the dark. Whin-burning—or the camps of Maglemose?

III. *Summer*

I cycled up the Glen of Drumtochty to-day. It was very hot, the heat was caught in the cup of the Howe and spun and stirred there, milkily, by little currents of wind that had come filtering down through the Grampian passes. In the long, dusty stretches of roadway my shadow winked and fluttered perspiringly while I followed in a sympathetic sweat. This till we passed down into Glen itself, when the overshadowing hills flung us a cool shade. There the water sparkled and spun coolly, so coldly, a little burn with deep brown detritus winding amidst the broom and the whins. To the left the reafforested Drumtochty Hill towered up dazzlingly impossible in purple. This Tyrian splendour on Drumtochty Hill is probably unmatched in all Scotland,

very breath-taking and strange, alien to Scotland: it is a wonder, a flamboyant flaunting of nature that comes for a month on our dour hill-lands and we stare at it, sober, Presbyterian, from our blacks and browns—much as MacDiarmid visioned the Scots on Judgment Day staring at

> " God and a' his gang
> O' angels in the lift,
> Thae trashy, bleezin' French-like folk
> Wha garred them shift. . . ."

Beyond the contours of Drumtochty, through the piping of that stillness, snipe were sounding. I got off my bicycle to listen to that and look round. So doing I was aware of a sober fact: that indeed all this was a little disappointing. I would never apprehend its full darkly colourful beauty until I had gone back to England, far from it, down in the smooth pastures of Hertfordshire some night I would remember it and itch to write of it, I would see it without the unessentials—sweat and flies and that hideous gimcrack castle, nestling—(Good God, it even *nestled!*) among the trees. I would see it in simplicity then, even as I would see the people of the land.

This perhaps is the real land; not those furrows that haunt me as animate. This is the land, unstirred and greatly untouched by men, unknowing ploughing or crops or the coming of the scythe. Yet even those hills were not always thus. The Archaic Civilization came here and terraced great sections of those hills and reared Devil Stones, Sun Circles, to the great agricultural gods of ancient times—long ago, before Pytheas sailed these coasts, while Alexander rode his horse across the Jaxartes there were peasants on those hills, on such a day as this, who paused to wipe the sweat from their faces and look with shrewd eyes at the green upspringing of the barley crops. . . . By night they slept in houses dug in the earth, roofed with thatch, and looked out on a wilder and wetter Howe, but still with that passion of purple mantling it in this month. They are so tenuous and yet so real, those folk—and how they haunted me years ago! I had no great interest in the things around me, I remember, the summer dawns that came flecked with saffron over the ricks of my father's farm, the whisper and pelt of the corn-heads, green turning to yellow in the long fields that lay down in front of our front-

door, the rattle and creak of the shelvins of a passing box-cart, the chirp and sardonic *Ay!* of the farming childe who squatted unshaven, with twinkling eyes, on the forefront of the shelvin . . . but the ancient men haunted those woods and hills for me, and do so still.

I climbed up the top of Cairn o' Mount with my bicycle and sat and lunched and looked about me: and found it very still, the land of Scotland taking a brief siesta in that midday hour. Down in the north the green parks miles away, were like plaques of malachite set on the table of some craftsman of ancient Chichen-Itza or Mexico, translucent and gleaming and polished. One understood then, if never before, how that colour—green—obsessed the ancient civilization with its magic virtues. It was one of the colours that marked a Giver of Life—reasonably, for those crops are surely such Givers? It is better land here than in my homeland—darker, streaked with clay, but with a richer sub-soil. Between the green of the corn and barley shone the darker stretches of the tattie-shaws, the turnip tops, and the honey brown of the clover. Bees were humming about me: one came and ate jam from my sandwiches, some discontented apian soul unfulfilled with the natural honey of the heather-bells and longing for the tart, sharp tastes of the artificial.

He is not alone in that. In the days of my youth (I have that odd pleasure that men in the early thirties derive from thinking of themselves as beyond youth: this pleasure fades in the forties) men and women still lived largely on the food-stuffs grown in the districts—kale and cabbage and good oatmeal, they made brose and porridge and crisp oat-cakes, and jams from the blackberry bushes in the dour little, sour little gardens. But that is mostly a matter of the past. There are few who bake oatcakes nowadays, fewer still who ever taste kale. Stuff from the grocer's, stuff in bottles and tins, the canned nutriments of Chicago and the ubiquitous Fray Bentos, have supplanted the old-time diets. This dull, feculent stuff is more easy to deal with, not enslaving your whole life as once the cooking and serving did in the little farms and cottars' houses—cooking in the heat of such a day as this on great open fireplaces, without even a range. And though I sit here on this hill and deplore the fusionless foods of the canneries, I have no sympathy at all with those odd souls of the cities who would

see the return of that "rich agricultural life" as the return of something praiseworthy, blessed and rich and generous. Better Fray Bentos and a seat in the pictures with your man of a Saturday night than a grilling baking of piled oatcakes and a headache withal.

They change reluctantly, the men and women of the little crofts and cottar houses; but slowly a quite new orientation of outlook is taking place. There are fewer children now plodding through the black glaur of the wet summer storms to school, fewer in both farm and cottar house. The ancient, strange whirlimagig of the generations that enslaved the Scots peasantry for centuries is broken. In times gone by a ploughman might save and scrape and live meanly and hardly and marry a quean of like mettle. And in time they would have gathered enough to rent a croft, then a little farm; and all the while they saved, and lived austere, sardonic lives; and their savings took them at last to the wide cattle-courts and the great stone-floored kitchen of a large farm. And all the while the woman bred, very efficiently and plentifully and without fuss—twelve or thirteen were the common numberings of a farmer's progeny. And those children grew up, and their father died. And in the division of property at his death each son or daughter gathered as inheritance only a few poor pounds. And perforce they started as ploughmen in the bothies, maids in the kitchens, and set about climbing the rungs again—that their children might do the same.

It kept a kind of democracy on the land that is gone or is going; your halflin or your maid was the son or the daughter of your old friends of High Rigs: your own sons and daughters were in bothies or little crofts: it was a perfect Spenglerian cycle. Yet it was waste effort, it was as foolish as the plod of an ass in a treadmill, innumerable generations of asses. If the clumsy fumblements of contraception have done no more than break the wheel and play of that ancient cycle they have done much. Under these hills —so summer-hazed, so immobile and essentially unchanging—of a hundred years hence I do not know what strange master of the cultivated lands will pass in what strange mechanical contrivance: but he will be outwith that ancient yoke, and I send him my love and the hope that he'll sometime climb up Cairn o' Mount and sit where I'm sitting now, and stray in summery thought—into the sun-

hazed mists of the future, into the lives and wistful desirings of forgotten men who begat him.

IV. *Autumn*

I have a daughter four years old who was born in England and goes to school there, and already has notions on ethnology. Occasionally she and I debate and fall out, and her final triumphant thrust is "You're only Scotch!"

Autumn of all seasons is when I realize how very Scotch I am, how interwoven with the fibre of my body and personality is this land and its queer, scarce harvests, its hours of reeking sunshine and stifling rain, how much a stranger I am, south, in those seasons of mist and mellow fruitfulness as alien to my Howe as the olive groves of Persia. It is a harder and slower harvest, and lovelier in its austerity, that is gathered here, in September's early coming, in doubtful glances on the sky at dawn, in listening to the sigh of the sea down there by Bervie. Mellow it certainly is not: but it has the most unique of tangs, this season haunted by the laplaplap of the peesie's wings, by great moons that come nowhere as in Scotland, unending moons when the harvesting carts plod through great thickets of fir-shadow to the cornyards deep in glaur.

These are the most magical nights of the land: they endure but a little while, but their smells—sharp and clear, commingled of fresh horse-dung and dusty cornheads—pervade the winter months. The champ and showd of a horse in that moonsprayed dark and the guttural "Tchkh, min!" of the forker, the great shapes of cattle in the parks as you ride by, the glimmer far away of the lights of some couthy toun on the verge of sleep, the queer shapes of post and gate and stook—Nature unfolds the puppets and theatre pieces year after year, unvaryingly, and they lose their dust, each year uniquely fresh. You can stand and listen as though for the lost trumpet of God in that autumn night silence: but indeed all that you are listening for is a passing peewit.

It is strange how Scotland has no Gilbert White or H. J. Massingham to sing its fields, its birds, such night as this, to chronicle the comings and goings of the swallows in simple, careful prose, ecstasy controlled. But perhaps not so strange. We Scots have little interest in the wild and its world; I realize how compassed and controlled is my own

interest, I am vague about sparrows and tits, martins and swallows, I know little of their seasons, and my ignorance lies heavily upon me not at all. I am concerned so much more deeply with men and women, with their nights and days, the things they believe, the things that move them to pain and anger and the callous, idle cruelties that are yet undead. When I hear or read of a dog tortured to death, very vilely and foully, of some old horse driven to a broken back down a hill with an overloaded cart of corn, of rats captured and tormented with red-hot pokers in bothies, I have a shudder of disgust. But these things do not move me too deeply, not as the fate of the old-time Cameronian prisoners over there, three miles away in Dunnottar; not as the face of that ragged tramp who went by this afternoon; not as the crucifixion of the Spartacist slaves along the Appian Way. To me it is inconceivable that sincere and honest men should go outside the range of their own species with gifts of pity and angry compassion and rage when there is horror and dread among humankind. I am unreasonably and mulishly prejudiced in favour of my own biological species. I am a jingo patriot of planet earth: "Humanity right or wrong!"

Particularly in Autumn. At noon I crossed a field off which the last of the stooks had been lifted and led captive away, the gaping stubble heads pushed through the cricks of clay, the long bouts of the binder wound and wheeled around the park, where the foreman had driven his team three weeks before. And each of those minute stubble stalks grew from seed that men had handled and winnowed and selected and ploughed and harrowed the earth to receive, and sown and tended and watched come up in the rains of Springs and the hot Summer suns—each and all of these—and out and beyond their kindred trillions in the other parks, up to the biggings of Upperhill there, and south through all the chave of the Howe to the black lands that start by Brechin and roll down the coast till they come to the richness of Lothian and the orchards of Blairgowrie. . . . This is our power, this the wonder of humankind, our one great victory over nature and time. Three million years hence our descendants out on some tremendous furrowing of the Galaxy, with the Great Bear yoked to The Plough and the wastes of space their fields, will remember this little planet, if at all, for the men who con-

quered the land and wrung sustenance from it by stealth and shrewdness and a savage and surly endurance. Nothing else at all may endure in those overhuman memories: I do not think there is anything else I want to endure.

The ricks loom tall and white in the moonlight about their yellow bosses: folk are loosening the heavy horses from the carts and leading them tramp, tramp across the cobbles of the close: with a scrape and clatter by the water-trough and a silence and then the sound of a slavering long, enjoyable long suction: I feel thirsty in sympathy with that equine delight of cool, good water in a parched mouth and throat. Then a light blinks through the cob-webs of the stable, an impatient voice says *Wissh!* and harvest is over.

Quiet enough here, because the very young and irresponsible are not here. But elsewhere, nights like this, up and down the great agricultural belts of Scotland, in and about the yards and the ricks, there is still some relic of the ancient fun at the last ingathering of the sheaves—still a genial clowning and drinking and a staring at the moon, and slow, steady childes swinging away to the bothies, their hands deep down in their pouches, their boots striking fire from the cobbles; still maids to wait their lads in the lee of the new-built stacks, and be cuddled and warm and happy against brown, dank chests, and be kissed into wonder on the world, and taste the goodness of the night and the Autumn's end. . . . Before the Winter comes.

To-morrow the potato harvests, of course. But somehow they are not real harvests, they are not truly of Autumn as is the taking in of the corn. It is still an alien plant, the potato, an intruder from that world of wild belief and wilder practice that we call the New, a plant that hides and lairs deep down in the midst of back-breaking drills. The corn is so ancient that its fresh harvesting is no more than the killing of an ancient enemy-friend, ritualistic, that you may eat of the flesh of the God, drink of his blood, and be given salvation and life.

§ 5.

NEWSREEL

I THINK it perhaps advisable to state that, contrary to rumours which are circulating, the Loch Ness "monster"

was not invented by the Scottish Travel Association as a means of publicity for bringing people to Scotland.

Douglas G. Russell in *The Scotsman.*

The tour of the Duke and Duchess of York is an event of supreme importance to Skye. The Duke was inspired to give the island a new poetic designation as "the isle of kind and loyal hearts".

The Weekly Scotsman.

Loch Ness has acquired a weird interest from the many stories this summer of a strange monster frequenting its waters. This is not the tale associated with not a few lochs of the Highlands of the water-horse or kelpie, always ready to lure unsuspecting people to a watery grave, but of a real monster of undetermined species appearing at intervals on the surface of the water.

The Weekly Scotsman.

A plague of giant adders is worrying farmers in Ardnamurchan and the island of Mull. In some places they can be seen in dozens lying in the roadside and dikes.

Glasgow Evening News.

Perthshire Gaelic is excellent, but, in its spoken form, exhibits a somewhat free use of elisions. It cannot compare with the speech of Argyll in purity of diction or with that of Invernesshire in poetic epigrams.

The Weekly Scotsman.

It is the climate of Britain that makes it the one country in the world where work is appropriate.

The Scots Observer.

I wonder how many people believe that hard work is the only road to happiness? I have had forty years of it and what would I not give now for £3 a week and nothing to do? What do these people who write or talk about hard work know about the subject? Do they know what it means to plough a field in a piercing February wind, to swelter under a scorching sun, to be frizzled until the skin peels before a puddling furnace; or to endure for twelve hours daily, year after year, the noise and tuberculosis-breeding atmosphere of a cotton mill?

Correspondent in *Glasgow Bulletin.*

At no time in our history were our Highlands better patronized by outsiders than they are at the present moment, but the class that reach us is gradually changing from the very wealthy to those of moderate means. Curiously enough, the latter enrich the countryside to a greater degree than the former ever did, for they do not bring their own goods but buy locally.

Angus Henderson in *The Scots Observer.*

When the Cairngorms were clad in samite mystic, wonderful, and the spey was in its Autumn flood, Loch Inch welcoming the influx rose to agreeable heights.

Elsie M. Baker in *Glasgow Evening News.*

The heather is purpling in the far glens and the first silver mists of autumn are gathering round the Western Isles. Strange voices and strange guns speak over the moorlands, proclaiming to all the Highlands the dawn of another brilliant season. To all but one woman—a trim youthful figure in Harris tweeds, sitting at her typewriter in an office in Perth, planning the winter campaign of the Scottish Women's Rural Institute. *Scots Observer.*

"Lewis tweed!" said a Harris woman to me once. "Hold it up to the sky and you will see the stars of Heaven shining in it." A perfect chorus of abuse streamed forth from her family in which the unfortunate Lewis tweed was compared with everything varying from baskets to fishing nets. "Aye", said her husband, placing the last stone on the grave, "the grass would be growing through it." Nevertheless it is a most comfortable light covering, especially for mountaineering. But in Harris a tweed is a tweed only if you can carry a cupful of water in it. "Like t'great horse-blanket whatever," as a bitter one from the Lewis said.

Olive Fraser in the *Glasgow Daily Herald.*

I am at present residing in Fife for the purpose of studying village life. Some of the things that amaze me are: — The generosity of Scotsmen; the narrowness of mind complex; the religious mania complex; the respectability complex; the superstition complex; the dread of nocturnal phenomena; the dread of astronomical phenomena; the sartorial complex; and the desire to stay as they are at all costs. E. O. C. Skinner in *Scottish Daily Express.*

SECTION THE LAST

§ 1. Essay — Lewis Grassic Gibbon

RELIGION

Definition is the better part of dissertation. Before one sets to a sketch of Religion in Scotland it is well to state what Religion is not. It is not altruism, it is not awe, it is not the exercise of a super-conscious sense. It is not ethics; it is not morality. It is neither the evolution of primitive Fear into civilized Worship nor the deified apprehension of an extra-mundane Terror.

Instead, a Religion is no more than a corpus of archaic science. The origin of Religion was purely utilitarian. Primitives—the food-gatherers, the ancient folk of all the ancient world—knew no religion. Their few and scattered survivors in this and that tiny crinkle of our planet are as happily irreligious as our own remote ancestors. They are without gods or devils, worship or cities, sacrifices or kings, theologies or social classes. Man is naturally irreligious. Religion is no more fundamental to the human character than cancer is fundamental to the human brain.

Man in a Primitive condition is not Man Savage. Confusion of those two distinct cultural phases has led to the ludicrous condition of anthropology and ethnology at the present day—the confusion which produces such eminent Scotsmen as Sir Arthur Keith capable of asserting that racialism is the life-blood of progress. Of a like order and origin are the wordy "theses" of the various psycho-analyst groups which follow Freud and Jung. Psycho-analysts are our modern supreme specialists in the art of slipshod research. A Viennese Jew has been haunted from early years by the desire (inhibited) to cut his father's throat. The psycho-analyst, excavating details of this laudable, but abortive intention, turns to such gigantic compendiums of irrelevantly-indexed myth and custom as Sir James G. Frazer's *Golden Bough*. Therein he discovers that parricide was common to Bantu, Melanesian, aboriginal Austra-

lian. Ergo, common to primitives; ergo, a fundamental human trait. . . . The fact that Bantus, Melanesians and Australians are not primitives, but savages, peoples who have absorbed religious and social details from alien cultures and transformed their economic organization in harmony with that absorption is either unapprehended or dismissed as unimportant: and we reach back to smear the face of Natural Man with the filth of our own disease.

Particularly is this the case with regard to Religion; and particularly is the truly utilitarian nature of Religion manifested in that long life of three centuries which the Scots people led under the ægis of the Presbyterian churches.

Religion for the Scot was essentially a means of assuring himself life in the next world, health in this, prosperity, wealth, fruitful wombs and harvests. The Auld Kirk in Scotland is the greatest example of an armchair scientific Religion known to the world since the decay of the great State cults of Egypt and Mexico. In the case of all three countries the Gods were both unlovely and largely unloved; and in the case of all three definite discomforts of apparel and conduct were undergone in return for definite celestial favours manifested upon the terrestrial scene. One of those innumerable (and generally nauseating) pulpit stories illustrates this:

"A town minister was on holiday in the country, and consented to act one Sabbath in place of the local incumbent. While he was robing himself in the vestry he was approached by some of the elders, farmers all, and tactfully desired to remember in his prayers a supplication for rain—there had been a considerable drouth. Accordingly, he ascended the pulpit, and in the course of the service prayed that 'the windows of Heaven might be opened to cheer the thirsty ground, and fulfil the earnest hopes of the husbandman.'

"Scarcely had he finished than a flash of lightning was observed through the kirk windows. The growl of thunder followed; and in a few minutes such a downpour of rain as was speedily levelling to the ground the standing crops, and leaving the cornfields ruined and desolate. Ascribing this disastrous phenomenon [very reasonably] to the minister's prayer, one of the farmers remarked as he tramped away through the rain: 'That

poor fool may be well enough in the town, but God Almighty! the sooner he's out of the country the better for everybody'."

Behind those couthy tales of ministers and kirks, beadles and elders, sessions and sextons, a system operated with a ruthless efficiency for three long centuries. In Scotland the human mind and the human body were in thrall to what the orthodox would call a reign of religion, what the Diffusionist historian recognizes as the reign of a cultural aberration, what the political student might apprehend as a reign of terror. The fears and hopes of long-defunct Levantines, as set forth in the Christian Bible, were accepted as a code of conduct, as a science of life, and foisted upon the Scottish scene without mercy and greatly without favour. This is an attempt at impartial statement, not an expression of anti-Christianity. Had they been the codes of the Korân or the Rig-veda the scene would doubtlessly have been even more farcical objectively, if in subjective essence the same.

Late seventeenth and eighteenth century Scotland saw the domination of the code at its most rigorous. Not only was the Sunday (meticulously then, as still in the meeting-houses of the Free Kirk, misnamed the Sabbath) a day of rigid and inexorable piety, but the week-days as well were under the control and spying activities of kirk-session and minister, beadle—and indeed any odd being with a desire to vex the lives of his fellow-men. The Sunday in particular was sanctified to an exclusive care with the rites and wraths of the Scottish Huitzilopochtli—war-god and maize-god in one. In the *Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century* a slightly modernized cleric says of the kirk-officers, beadles and deacons:

"There was not a place where one was free from their inquisitorial intrusion. They might enter any house and even pry into rooms. In towns where the patrol of elders or deacons, beadle and officers, paced with solemnity the deserted causeway eagerly eyeing every door and window, craning their necks up every close and lane, the people slunk into the obscurity of shadows and kept hushed silence. So still, so empty were the streets on a Sunday night that no lamps were lighted, for no

passengers passed by, or if they did they had no right to walk."

This was the state of affairs everywhere, not only in small and obscure parishes. Elders and deacons were empowered to visit where they liked, to assure themselves that families were engaged in unsecular interests. If admittance were refused them to a house they could (and very frequently did) invoke the civil magistrates' aid for breaking in forcibly. They could impose innumerable fines and penalties. The power of life and death was in the hands of this great priesthood, the guardians and functionaries of the science. A minute of the Edinburgh kirk-session (from *The King's Pious Proclamation* (1727)) says:

> "Taking into consideration that the Lord's Day is profaned by people standing in the streets, vaguing in the fields and gardens, as also by idly gazing out at windows, and children and apprentices playing in the streets, warn parents and threaten to refer to the Civil Magistrates for punishment, also order each Session to take its turn in watching the streets on Sabbath, as has been the laudable custom of this city, and to visit each suspected house in each parish by elders and deacons, with beadle and officers, and after sermon, when the day is long, to pass through the streets and reprove such as transgress, and inform on such as do not refrain".

During the week the minister might notify any member of his congregation that he intended to visit him in his own house and hold a "catechizing" of his family. This "catechizing" consisted of a play of question and answer on knowledge of the Christian Scriptures, the Christian Code of the Good Life, and the Christian Code of Eternal Punishment. Everyone was questioned in rote—the master, the mistress, the children, and all the servants within the gates. Those who failed to answer according to the code might be rebuked or punished, according to the nature of the offence; those who failed to put in an appearance at those ceremonies of droned affirmation and incantation might be very bitterly prosecuted. Until well towards the nineties of last century the officials of the Scots priesthood were the real rulers of the Scots scene, they were Spartan ephors, largely elected by the people and keeping the people under a rigorous rule. And then the rank

blossomings of Industrialism loosened their hold, weakened their status, and freed Scotland from the nightmare of their power.

It is obvious that any people under the rule of such rigorous and forbidding code—belief in a joyless but necessary agricultural God, belief in a joyless but necessary ceremonial ritual—would develop strange abnormalities of appearance and behaviour. It is evident in the ancient scene in Mexico, for example, where every year thousands of human beings were sacrificed to the Gods of the earth and rain, that a few more hundred years of evolution along the same lines would have wrought a biological deviation from the human norm: the ancient Mexicans, but for the fortunate arrival of Cortes, would have aberrated into a sub-species of *Homo Sapiens*. The same may be said of the Scots. Left alone and uninvaded, they might have passed entirely beyond the orbit of the normally human but for the coming of the Industrial Revolution. This brought Scotland its slums and its Glasgow, its great wens of ironworks and collieries upon the open face of the countryside; but its final efflorescence broke the power of the Church and released the Scot to a strange and terrible and lovely world, the world of science and scepticism and high belief and free valour—emerging into the sunlight of history from a ghoul-haunted cañon.

There is still a Church of Scotland—ostensibly more powerful than ever, having recently amalgamated with its great rival, the United Free Church. There are still innumerable ministers of the Kirk to be met with in the leafy manse walks, the crowded Edinburgh streets, the gatherings of conferences and associations and the like. There is still the trickle of the kirkward folk on a Sabbath morning in summer, when the peewits hold their unending plaint over the greening fields and the young boys linger and kick at the thistles by the wayside, and young girls step daintily down whin-guarded paths and over the cowdung pats by this and that gate. There is still the yearly Assembly of the Kirk in Edinburgh—the strangest of functions, with the High Commissioner some vague politician generally discreetly unintelligible and inevitably discreetly unintelligent; with elderly clergymen acclaiming War "for the good of the nation," the sword the weapon of Christianity, the economic crisis an Apollyon to be moved

by prayer. There are still old women and men who find sustenance and ease and comfort in the droned chantings of the risen God, in symbolic cannibal feastings upon the body of the dead God at time of Communion. . . .

But it is little more now than a thin and tattered veil upon the face of the Scottish scene. This ostensibly powerful Kirk, twin-headed, is riven with the sorriest of all disputes—a quarrel over meal and milk. For the old United Frees will not give up their own ministers and kirks in favour of the Auld Kirk ministers and kirks; nor vice versa. So in most parishes there are still to be found two churches in close proximity, staffed by ministers preaching exactly the same doctrine, ministers preaching to congregations of twenty or so in buildings erected to house a hundred. But the ministers themselves—of manse and walk and street and conference—are of strangely different quality and calibre to those who manned the Kirk in the mid-eighteenth century.

There are few such pleasant people as the younger ministers of Scotland. Pleasant is the one possible adjective. They are (the most of them) free-hearted and liberal, mild socialists, men with pleasant wives who blush over the books of such writers as myself, but read them nevertheless and say pleasant things about the pleasant passages. But the older generation differs from the younger very greatly. It has run to girth and very often to grossness. It grins with unloosened vest. Its congregation grins dourly in comprehension. It is, in the country parishes, the understood thing that the middle-aged, genial minister generally "sleeps with" his housekeeper—a proceeding, I remember, which greatly astonished my innocent youth, for why should a man like the minister want to sleep with anyone when he had a big, fine bed of his own? The most luscious of filthy tales (with women the butt and object of each and the sex-act the festering focal point) I have ever heard were from the lips of a highly respected and reputable minister of the Church of Scotland who still preaches to an exclusive congregation in one of the Four Cities. The minister a minister at the beginning of the present century had been greatly freed from the fears and tabus that formerly inhered in the functioning of his office, but had obtained no such measure of mental freedom and enlightenment as his younger colleague of to-day.

And that kirkwards trickle of the folk is delusive as well. Here you behold not the fervid Presbyterian but the bored (if complacent) farmer and his wife attending a mild social function. They are going to church because there is nothing much else to be done on a Sunday; they can meet a neighbour there and ask him to supper; the wife will survey with some interest a neighbouring wife's hat or the advances yet another neighbour is making in exhibition of her stages of pregnancy. The old fires and the old fears are gone. Men and women sit and listen with a placid benignancy to sermons as varied in opinion and scope as are the political reaches between fascism and communism . . . and they are quite unstirred. It is something quite unconcerned with their everyday life of factory and field and hope and fear, it is something to amuse the wife and good for the children. . . . Why good? They are vague.

And though some of those children reluctantly holding kirkwards, reluctantly seated in those unpadded pews and staring with desperate earnestness at the buzzing busyness of a fly seeking to escape through the panes of a glazed window, may indeed have strange fears and dark terrors upon them, fears that awaken them screaming in the nights with this horrific God thrusting them into sizzling pits of fire because of some minor lapse of the previous day, fears that make lonely wood walks a terror, every screech of an owl the cry of some devil or gnome from the pages of Christian myth, yet their numbers are probably few. It is still a terrible and a dreadful thing that the minds of a nation's youth should be twisted and debased by those ancient, obscene beliefs and restraints; yet, good democrats, we may rejoice that it is now only the minds of the minority —the intelligent minority—that so suffer. And they are growing up into habitation of a world that will presently look back upon even the emasculated rites of the Kirk of Scotland as insanely irrelevant to human affairs as the Black Mass.

Nor does the yearly General Assembly resemble (as once) the Sanhedrin of the Jews. To a large extent it is the excuse and occasion for much tea-drinking and the exchange of views on theological scholarship, rose-growing, and the meaner scandals. Its public speeches have an unexciting monotone of supplication and regret: the young are leaving the Kirk, how may they be reclaimed? The

tides of irreligion and paganism are flooding in upon us: how may they be stayed? A similar tidal problem once confronted King Canute. It is recorded that he used denunciation with singular lack of success, and modern experience appears to verify the historical precedent. The pedestrian who pauses midway a meadow and seeks to stay a charging bull by alternately denouncing its brutish appearance and calling upon it to forgo its essential bullishness is unlikely to survive the occasion for a sufficient length of time to draw up an unimpassioned monograph on the subject.

Ocassionally (as has been noted) the Assembly abandons the pagans and turns to consideration of such pressing matters as unemployment, war, and the economic system. In the case of the first and the last it is, (very naturally and to some extent blamelessly, for it is the assembly of ministers of a State Religion) impotent. More diversity of talent and opinion greets the subject of war. Padded elderly gentlemen with cheerfully carmine cheeks and grey whiskers uphold the Sword as the Weapon of Righteousness, used aforetime by Scotland in defence of her liberties: may not Scotland need the Sword again? A sad commentary on the relation of the Assembly to contemporary military science lies in the fact that no opponent appears to have suggested the archaic character of the sword in modern warfare. Why not the Saw-Toothed Bayonet of Salvation? Why not the Gas of God? . . . Vexed from that humble impartiality which is his aim the investigator toys with a vision of the plump, rosy parson in the dirty grey pallor of a gas attack—Lewisite for preference. He sees the rosy cheeks cave in, the eyes start forth like those of a ham-strung pig, the mouth move vomiting as the gas bites into lung-tissues. He turns with a vagrant sigh from that vision: that sight in actuality would almost be worth another War.

That many of the old and the middle-aged of both sexes find comfort in the Kirk and its ceremonies is undeniable. And this brings us to a fine human essence in the relationship of Kirk and people that may not be abandoned on recognition of the archaic nature of the rites of Communion and the like. That comfort was and is sometimes very real. The bitterly toilworn and the bitterly oppressed have been often sustained and cheered and up-

lifted for the cheerless life of the day to day by the lovely poetry of the Bible, the kindly and just and angrily righteous things therein. They have found inspiration and hope in the sayings and denunciations of some Jewish prophet long powder and nothing, but one who, like them, had doubted life because of its ills and cried on something beyond himself to redress the sad balance of things, to feed the hungry and put down the oppressor. The humble and the poor have found the Kirk and kirk life not only a grinding and a mean oppressiveness, they have found (and find) ministers who are cheerful and helpful beings, with or without their theology, knowledgeable men in medicine and times of stress, champions against lairds and factors and such-like fauna. They have found in the kirk itself, in the blessed peace and ease of a two hours' rest in the pews, listening to the only music they ever hear, refreshment and good feeling. If it has chastised the free and rebellious and wrought many bitter things upon the Scots spirit the Kirk has yet atoned in those little ways.

For they are little ways. A contented helot is not a freeman; a bitterly-oppressed and poverty-stricken serf is still a serf though you tell him tales in an idle hour and bind his worse hurts and soothe his worse fears of night and the dark that comes down on us all. The Kirk of Scotland, the Religion of the Kirk of Scotland, on its credit balance has done no more than that. It has tamed and clipped and sometimes soothed: it has used the sword often enough: after 1600 it used upon the people of Scotland themselves. Its policy and its code in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries produced that Scot who was our ancestor: the Scot who had mislaid original thought for a dour debating of fine theological points, who was more concerned to applaud the spirited conduct of Elijah with the bears than to guard his own economic freedom, who at twenty, married, looked on the clean lusts and desires of the marriage bed as shameful and disgusting things; who tormented in a pit of weariness his young children, Sabbath on Sabbath, with the learning by rote of dull and unintelligible theological chatter from a book that can be as painfully wearying as it can be painfully enthralling; who looked forward to "catechizings" with a clownish zest or a clownish fear; who mislaid beauty and tenderness and love of skies and the happy life of beasts and birds and children

for the stern restraints, the droning hymns and the superhuman endurances demanded of the attendants at Kirk service; whose social life revolved round the comings and goings, sayings and preachings, rebukings and praisings of priests who were often dull and foolish and froward men, often good and dull and bewildered men; who, a logician, passed a sinner to the grave and therefore to hell and those zestful burnings beloved of the Presbytery.

Naturally there were sceptics throughout that era, very cautious but biting sceptics:

" There was a Cameronian cat
A-seeking for its prey,
Went ben the hoose and caught a moose
Upon the Sabbath day.

The Elders, they were horrified
And they were vexèd sair,
Sae straight they took that wicked cat
Afore the meenistair.

The meenistair was sairly grieved
And much displeased did say :
' Oh, bad perverted pussy-cat
Tae break the Sabbath day !

' The Sabbath's been, frae days o' yore,
An Institution :
Saw straichtway tak' this wicked cat
Tae Execution ! ' "

Release from the secular power of the Kirk, or secular enforcement of the Kirk's displeasure, had effects on the Scots similar to those that sunlight and wine might have on a prisoner emerging from long years in a dank cellar. Freedom had been forbidden him: he became the conscienceless anarchist in politics, in commerce, in private affairs. Love of women and the glorying in it had been forbidden him: the modern Scot, escaping that tabu, is still fascinated and horrified by sex. He has seen it swathed in dirty veils of phrase and sentiment so long that now he would expose it for the ludicrous and lewd and ridiculous thing he conceives it must be: Scots in conversation, Scots novelists in their books these modern days are full of details of sex and the sex-act, crude and insanitary details. . . . They have escaped the tabu and sought the reality and

stumbled into a midden on the way. An aphasia of the spirit has descended on the Scot so that he can see only the foul in a thing that is neither foul nor fair, that is jolly and necessary and amusing and thrilling and tremendous fun and a deadly bore and exhilarating to the point of making one sing and dreadful to the point of making one weep. . . .

This is where the effects of Presbyterianism join issue with the effects of the other Religions which dwindlingly survived in Reformed Scotland. Catholicism was more mellow and colourful and poetic: it was also darker and older and more oppressed by even more ancient shames. It produced an attitude of mind more soft than the Presbyterian: and also infinitely more servile. Sex has always been a tabu and shameful thing to the Catholic mind, a thing to be *transmuted*—in the fashion of gathering a lovely lily from its cheerful dung and transmuting it into a glassy ornament for a sterile altar. Episcopalianism is in a different category. From the first it was more a matter of social status than of theological conviction; it was rather a grateful bourgeois acknowledgement of Anglicization than dissent with regard to the methods of worshipping a God. A typical Episcopalian was Sir Walter Scott—shallow and sedulous, incurably second-rate, incapable (so had his spirit-stuff been moulded) of either delineating the essentials of human character or of apprehending the essentials of human motivation. The Episcopalian Church in Scotland gave to life and ritual mildly colourful trappings, a sober display: it avoided God with a shudder of genteel distaste.

The modern Free Church member is the ancient Presbyterian who has learned nothing and forgotten nothing. As certain unfortunate children abandon mental development at the cretinaceous age of eight, Free Church doctrine, essentially un-Christian, abandoned development with the coming of the Kelts. It is a strange and disgusting cult of antique fear and antique spite. It looks upon all the gracious and fine things of the human body—particularly the body of woman—with sickened abhorrence, it detests music and light and life and mirth, the God of its passionate conviction is a kind of immortal Peeping Tom, an unsleeping celestial sneak-thief, it seeks to cramp and distort the minds of the young much as the ancient Maya

sought to mould the brain-stuff of *their* young by deforming the infants' heads with the aid of tightly-strapped slats of wood. As fantastically irrelevant to contemporary Scottish affairs as the appendix is to the human body, its elimination may be brought about rather by advances in social hygiene than by surgical operation.

Debating those elementary facts with regard to Religion in Scotland the present writer before this time has met with the surprising complaint: "And what is going to happen now? What are you going to put in the place of Religion?" The question shows some confusion of mind. The present writer has no hand in bringing about the decay of Religion; nor, alas, is he likely to have any hand in planning its succession. That succession lies with great economic and historical movements now in being—movements which may bring to birth the strangest of progeny on which we may look aghast. Of the future of Religion ultimately the historian can have little doubt: he sees its coming in ancient times, in the world of the Simple Men, as a cortical abortion, a misapprehension of the functions and activities of nature interlarded and interwoven with attributes mistakenly applied to human rulers. He sees its passing from the human scene—even the Scots scene—in the processes of change, immutable and unstayable. But—

But there may be long delays in that passing. Another abortion of inactive brains—that of Fascism—looms over a tormented world, a creed of the *must* jungle brute, the cowardly degenerate who fears the fine steely glimmer of the open spaces of the heavens, the winds of change, the flow and cry of strange seas and stars in human conduct and human hope—who would drag men back into economic night, into slavery to the state, into slavery (all slaveries aid his purpose) to the archaic institutions of Religion. What has happened in Italy and Germany may happen in Scotland. The various Scots nationalist parties have large elements of Fascism within them. There is now a definite Fascist Party. If ever such philosophy should reach to power then again we may see deserted streets of a Sabbath, crowded kirks, persecutions and little parish tyrannies, a Free Kirk minister's millennial dream. If such should be the play of chance it is to be hoped that the historian (albeit himself on the way to the scaffold or the

pillory) will look on the process with a cool dispassion, seeing it as no more than a temporary deviation, a thing that from its nature cannot endure. Man has survived this disease far too long either to perish in its last bout of fever or permanently retire into delirium tremens.

One sees rise ultimately (in that perfect state that is an ultimate necessity for human survival, for there is no sure half-way house between Utopia and extinction) in place of Religion—Nothing. To return to clinical similes, one does not seek to replace a fever by an attack of jaundice. One seeks the fields and night and the sound of the sea, the warmth of good talk and human companionship, love, wonder in the minute life of a water-drop, exultation in the wheeling Galaxy. All these fine things remain and are made the more gracious and serene and unthreatened as Religion passes. Passing, it takes with it nothing of the good—pity and hope and benevolence. Benevolence is as natural to Natural Man as hunger. It is an elementary thalamic state, a conditioned reflex of mental and physical health.

Yet, because men are not merely the victims, the hapless leaves storm-blown, of historic forces, but may guide if they cannot generate that storm, it might be well to glance at this last at those members of the various Scots priesthoods who affirm their liberalism, their belief in change, their faith that in a purified Christianity is the strait and undeniable way to that necessary Utopia. One cannot but believe that this is a delusion:

> " Thou, in the day that breaks thy prison,
> People, though these men take thy name,
> And hail and hymn thee rearisen,
> Who made songs erewhile of thy shame,
> Give thou not ear ; for these are they
> Whose good day was thine evil day.
>
> Set not thine hand upon their cross.
> Give not thy soul up sacrificed.
> Change not the gold of faith for dross
> Of Christian creeds that spit on Christ.
> Let not thy tree of freedom be
> Regrafted from that rotting tree."

But, if the investigator should stoop to point a moral, he would do so rather in the tale of the Laird of Udny's fool

than in heroic rhyme. Of Jamie Fleeman, the reputed fool of the parish, many a tale is told; and the best is that which relates how, of all kirks in Scotland, Udny suffered the worst from sleepy congregations. Hardly had the sermon begun than heads began to nod. One Sunday the minister —a new minister—looked down in the course of his discourse and saw only one member of the congregation awake, and that Jamie Fleeman.

Halting his sermon the minister exclaimed: "This sleeping in church is intolerable. There's only one man awake; and that man's a fool!" "Ay, ay, minister, you're right there," called up Jamie in reply. "And if I hadn't been a fool I'd have been sleeping as well."

§ 2. Essay — Hugh MacDiarmid

THE FUTURE

" A ! fredome is a noble thing !
Fredome mayss man to haiff liking ;
Fredome all solace to man giffis,
He levys at ess that frely levys !
A noble hart may haiff nane ess,
Na ellys nocht that may him pless,
Gyff fredome failzhe ; for fre liking
Is zharnyt our all other thing.
Na he, that ay hass levyt fre,
May nocht knaw weill the propyrte,
The anger, na the wrechyt dome,
That is cowplit to foule thryldome."

This is the quintessential note of the Scottish genius struck wherever throughout the centuries a Scotsman for however brief an interval has risen above the dodges of every dialectical system and struck a major note. T. F. Henderson has well said of Burns' *The Jolly Beggars:*

"Metrically it is a mere disordered and incongruous medley of scraps from the old vernacular 'makaris' and the innominate shyness of tradition, and the broadsides and the penny chapbooks. It is resonant of the echoes and refrains and sentiments of a miscellaneous crowd of preceding bards, celebrated and obscure. It is wholly lacking not merely in artistic originality, but almost in individuality of artistic achievement, and never was a

literary victory so renowned gained by methods so wholly unauthorised by the higher conventions, and in fact so unpretentious almost to contemptibility. But the victory is none the less complete and none the less intrinsically great. But of what seems poetic chaos he creates a nobly harmonious poetic unity, and in the realisation of his purpose he is so brilliantly, even radiantly, successful that this blackguard carousal in the squalid Ayrshire dosshouse becomes instinct with a human interest so genuine and alluring that only the very dullest or morosest can resist its spell."

> " A fig for those by law protected !
> Liberty's a glorious feast !
> Courts for cowards were erected,
> Churches built to please the priest."

Everything else in Scotland must be measured up against that glorious stanza—all but all of it is seen as some variant or other of "the cant about decorum"; the little that emerges from this test is the only thing that will matter to the future. The promising thing about the present in Scotland is simply that there is a wider and apparently increasing awareness of this, however miserably it may still be failing to secure effective expression and exemplification. That is the significance of the relation of Douglasism to the new National Movement. I have dealt with Douglas in another article in this book, but it is essential to stress here again that nothing in the National Movement is of the slightest consequence (or is really national, since what is national does not depend upon some poor cornerboy waiting at a pub-door for the result of the 3.30 but on its connection with the highest plane on which the national genius has expressed itself) except in so far as it is related to a vital recognition of the significance of Douglas's emergence at this juncture, his relation to what is the keynote of the Scottish genius, his achievement in a tremendous practical re-expression of that which constitutes the new Scotland's re-entry into the arena of world-affairs. Douglas himself showed his recognition of his historic role and the function of his message when he provided a scheme applicable to any country for the immediate application of his proposals in the form of a Draft Plan for Scotland, the publication of which was Scotland's first act

on this plane—the essential plane of its national genius and its world-function—since the terms of the Arbroath Declaration of Independence. Anything else that has been said or published or done by Scotland in that long interval —with the exception of a brief utterance here and there like that which I have just quoted from Burns—is relatively mere cant and must be dismissed with a sense of its shameful pettiness, disintegrity, and betrayal of the national genius. The particular quality of Douglasism in this way is splendidly brought out by Mr. Bonamy Dobrée, who, replying to Mr. J. Middleton Murry, writes:

> "The Douglas Scheme, Mr. Murry says, avoids the whole unpleasant business of creating an alternative structure of society. That it will produce an unparalleled (I use the word advisedly) change in society is obvious; for many of us it will be uncomfortable, no doubt. But Mr. Murry is right. It does avoid the unpleasant—for most people highly unpleasant—business of *creating* an alternative structure of society. If it comes about, society will be free to *let grow* any structure it finds convenient: that it does not attempt to *create* one is precisely its virtue. Haven't we had enough of these amateur deities —Cromwells and Lenins and Hitlers? These great idealist-reformers, like all religious reformers, hanker after power, and the result is invariably tyranny."

Thinking over all that has happened in connection with the new Scottish Movement during the past ten years, I am even a little surprised at the many quarters in which this has been clearly appreciated and hailed. One is apt to lose sight of this in the cataract of conventional humbug and petty journalese and brainless pulpiteering; the Dukes of Montrose, the Sir Alexander MacEwan's, the Sir John Gilmour's, the Sir Robert Horne's and all the party politicians and their allies in the Press and on the platform and among the public who have no glimmering of this are so numerous that one tends to conclude that the gleam is wholly lost and has ceased to shine through however intermittently. Not so! When the time comes it will be interesting to rediscover just exactly where it did manifest itself in these muddled years. I remember an essay of Edwin Muir's, for example, eight or nine years ago in which—in a different context—he expressed exactly what

Mr. Dobrée expresses in the passage quoted. I remember a critic reviewing some of my own books and pointing to my incapacity for being "pinned down" to any particular sect, and relating this to the operation in me in "the Caledonian antisyzygy." And, even as I am writing this, I find my friend Compton Mackenzie—in a very different context—practically paraphrasing Mr. Dobrée. Bear in mind Mr. Dobrée's advised use of the terms "unparalleled" and "uncomfortable."

> "I belong sufficiently to this age," says Mr. Mackenzie, "to apprehend that the changes in literature we now perceive are not the fugitive expression of a temporary condition; but I belong too much to the past to presume to claim a right of exegesis, and with these words I shall return to my own dreams of ways and means to give machine-man as difficult a course as possible."

But after that personal confession, he goes on to show his recognition of the unparalleled opportunity now presenting itself (an opportunity of which Douglasism, which Mr. Mackenzie whole-heartedly supports, is the essential economic technique);

> "It seems, indeed, that, unless some catastrophe of war or pestilence on a scale immensely greater than anything the world has yet known by exacerbating the struggle for existence intervenes to prolong the way of human thought since Genesis, the recent millenium of the Christian era will see humanity launched upon a way of thought a thousand times more different from our present ways of thought than ours from the thought of neolithic man."

That indeed is the realization that is at the core of the new Scottish Movement—albeit more than in any other country in Europe the ways of thought of the vast majority of our countrymen are so far from contemporary as to be scarcely, if at all, distinguishable from neolithic man's. The future of Scotland depends upon whether that tiny minority succeeds in leavening the unconscionable lump, or whether the lump succeeds in suffocating the minority.

The kind of literature—of expression of itself generally—which Scotland must produce if the former of these alternatives is to be achieved was described by Edwin Muir

when he wrote, concerning a certain note he heard in some of my early lyrics:

> "This vision is profoundly alien to the spirit of English poetry; the thing which resembles it most, outside other Scottish poetry, is, perhaps, the poetry of Villon. It is the product of a realistic, or more exactly a materialistic, imagination, which seizing upon everyday reality shows not the strange beauty which that sometimes takes on, but rather the beauty which it possesses normally and in use. There is in this perception of beauty less magic and less exaltation than in romantic poetry; but on the other hand it has more toughness, vigour, and fulness. The romantic note is of course often heard in Scottish poetry, and with supreme force in the Ballads, but it is this other note that is most essentially Scottish; it is this that sets aside the Ballads, the poetry of the Makars and of Burns, the prose of Carlyle and George Douglas Brown, from the literatures of all other peoples and gives these nationality and character."

Some people think they find some small gleams or glimmerings of this in the plays of another contemporary Scot, James Bridie—and particularly in his *The Sleeping Clergyman*—and on this account it has been said that he

> "is the only man among our younger playwrights likely to become as dominant a mind in the next phase of British drama as is Bernard Shaw at the present day."

Simply because he commented on the question of sterilization and insisted on the supreme value of every human being? This is a profound mistake and there is no hope that the quality of which I am writing will ever be apprehended in the very slightest degree by those capable of such an appalling misunderstanding. Bridie is only another somnambulistic Scotsman.

One or two other Scotsmen, however, had had authentic glimpses—John Macmurray, for example, when he avers that "true morality does not consist in obedience to a moral law," and says that "Duty fades right out of the picture in the Christian view of life"; and Compton Mackenzie when he says:

> "Although communism in its present stage may be the negation of Christianity, I often wonder whether like

one of Dostoievsky's infernal visions it may not in the end lead to a supernal revelation," and again, "If Communism can only be fought by the inverted form of it called Fascism, there is no hope for the individual so far as the externals of individuality count."

But, elsewhere, Mackenzie hits upon the real ground for hope—the unimpaired, undeceivable intuition of the Commons of Scotland—when he says:

"It takes a country like Scotland, whose democracy has lasted long enough to achieve an air of aristocracy, to maintain the position of a poet like Burns against all criticism. One of the reasons for the decline of Scott's influence over his countrymen is the way in which the sentimental North Briton throughout his work has begun to obscure the Scotsman."

The future of Scotland (any future worth having)—and of far more than Scotland—depends upon the revealing and setting forth of the quintessential Scotsman; and, happily, though I am under no delusions as to the worthlessness of the majority of our people, we have more than the requisite "ten men" amongst us for the purpose.

Reducing these reflections to the form of a programme then, the Programme of Scotland is (1) to recover and ensue the essence of its own genius as indicated in what I have just written; (2) to reduce England from its Ascendancy internally, imperially, and internationally to its own proper national condition; (3) to reaffiliate with Europe, and recognize our duty as the Western Frontier of Europe —a duty that includes not only the realization of Douglasism and its fullest implications (which is the essential gift of Scotland re-emerged as an independent national entity to the world) but also the special function of this as, not a counteraction to, but a corrective and complement of the great Russian Experiment which has temporarily unbalanced Europe. What stands in the way of the clear recognition of this as the Scottish National Programme by the Commons of Scotland are the Anglo-Scottish elements in our midst, the present needless economic and social evils imposed upon us by the Money Monopoly centred in London, the accomplice cant of our Churches (which have, significantly, always been the deadliest foes of Scottish Nationalism), and the use of the English language.

II

I propose to deal in the light of what I have just said with only one phase of the most important of these three points—the most important because it leads to all the others—namely, the first, for thanks to the Anglicization of our education, and our life generally, few people have reckoned effectively—or can reckon—with the essence of the Scottish nature, and, in addition to a general ignorance of Scottish literature and history, there is a widespread sense of being ashamed of being Scottish, and the compensatory aggressiveness of being Scottish in the conventional or Harry Lauder sense is only one form of this sense of shame. The "rediscovery of Scotland", of which a good deal has been made in certain newspapers during the past few years, is proceeding very slowly, as is only natural, for it is not a "rediscovery" at all. Scotland as a whole may have entered into world-consciousness, not a mere geographical expression, but as the seat of a spiritual quality or set of spiritual qualities, but these, such as they are, are far from definite. Most people may have a vague sensation when Scotland is mentioned, which is not "the glory that was Greece or the grandeur that was Rome" or "this England", although it is of the same order. But it would puzzle them to define it as they could readily enough define the corresponding quality of many other countries—or, rather, the trouble is just that it would not puzzle them; it has so completely failed to puzzle them that whereas in recent years there have been a succession of remarkable books contrasting the essential spirits of most of the countries of Europe—books like Keyserling's, Madariaga's, Siegfried's, Reiner's, Portheim's—there has been a complete absence of any such literature relative to Scotland. The genius of Scotland is an elusive quantity which has proved insusceptible of clear recognition or ready description. And this vague sense of an *ethos* curiously compounded of practical efficiency and the wildest romanticism, of a national character singularly unaffected by a cosmopolitanism only equalled by that of the Jews, and a passionate love of country almost entirely dependent upon exile, and with no practical co-efficient so far as Scotland itself is concerned, is further confused by the fact that the few parts of Scotland—the Hebrides, the Borderland—

which have entered into world-consciousness at all have done so under singularly unreal auspices and have tended to usurp the place of the national character as a whole rather than be as the regional manifestations they would have been if they had been legitimately born. The fact of the matter is that the whole business of "this Scottishness" is not genuinely autochthonous at all, but the product of a cultural convention (bred of our post-Union politico-economic circumstances) seeking to evade autochthonous expression at all costs and find all manner of substitutes for it. So we have Scott's absurd Highlands and no less absurd Borderland; so we have the baseless glamour of the Hebrides—and the Scottish people have been so long content with these that it is now practically impossible for them, let alone anybody else, to see the real article. Intranational elements of every kind have been obliterated in these false concepts as in an all-obliterating fog; the very regional names—Lennox, Cunningham, Rough Bounds, Angus and the Mearns, the Lammermuirs and the Merse—are not known and mean nothing even to the majority of the Scottish people. Only here and there one of them looms up in the mist, a mere shadow of what it should connote. Grey Galloway, for example; the objective is significant. Most significant of all is the general phrase: "Puir auld Scotland!"

A careful study of Scottish literature will prove my contentions up to the hilt. Writers upon it like Dr. Agnes Mure Mackenzie can only find one element in the Scottish scene that has been faithfully reflected in all the best of our poetry and prose—and that is the quality of our Northern light. Even so, the writers in whom this response is to be found, are little read except by students of literature and are all entirely apart from that peculiar Kailyairdism which is all of Scottish literature that is known to or appreciated by the great majority of the Scottish people. And in these Kailyaird writings this light never appears. But such critics and historians are hard put to it indeed to find any quotations which show a real knowledge of nature and faithful and loving interpretations of any of the elements or aspects of the Scottish scene. They are few and far between. Even Burns dealt for the most part in vague eighteenth-century personifications and generalized epithets: right down to the present day there is an extra-

ordinary dearth—an almost entire absence—of that first hand observation, intimate knowledge and loving particularly in which the literature of England is so rich. Scotland has a far more varied and scenically dominant river system than England has, but what river in Scotland has been effectively described? Scottish poetry has no such delineations of rivers as have abounded in every period of English poetry. The only one which has acquired a "mental climate" is the Yarrow—and that at the hands of an English poet. Indeed, if any attempt were to be made to present a "spiritual geography" of Scotland, English writers would predominate. Wordsworth, Keats, Clough, Gerard Manley Hopkins, G. K. Chesterton, Gordon Bottomley—it would be upon these the anthologist would have to make his principal levies; and, even so, three-parts of Scotland would remain a *terra nullius*—a "world unvisited."

It is to this fact that in the midst of all our contemporary distractions, which claim the bulk of their efforts in other directions, our younger Scottish writers are turning. Germs of promising novelistic regionalism have appeared; of descriptive essays and nature study scarcely a beginning has been made—and nothing approaching the quality of Edward Thomas or W. H. Hudson or Powys or Massingham or Henry Williamson has yet been written of my part of Scotland: and in poetry there remains an amazing lack of exact notation and of that sheer statement of what a thing is which also, perhaps, tells why it is and justifies its existence. Nevertheless in the work of the younger Scottish writers during the past ten years, and particularly in that of Lewis Grassic Gibbon, Neil Gunn, Moray Maclaren, William Soutar, Fionn MacColla, and Edwin and Willa Muir more has been contributed, albeit in tiny fragments so far, to such an anthology of (shall we call it?) "The Soul of Scotland" than accrues from any other decade or even any other half-century in our literary history. It is an effort which has now acquired an adequate momentum to carry it on to a far more extensive exploration and adequate description of Scotland than has previously been attempted; and the intensifying and greatly extended developments of it will constitute the most important elements of the great bulk of Scottish literature in the immediate future. Only in proportion as these

developments are made and assimilated will the great majority of our population cease to have the "unexamined lives which are not worth having"—not only not worth having but a danger to everything else that is worth having —and their activities in politics, religion, and other directions cease to be fiddling infantilisms.

> "There is nothing perhaps more provoking," wrote R. L. Stevenson, "than the great gulf that is set between England and Scotland. Here are two people almost identical in blood, the same in language and religion; and yet a few years of quarrelsome isolation, in comparison with the great historical cycles, have so separated their thoughts and ways, that not unions, nor mutual dangers, nor steamers, nor railways, nor yet the king's horses and all the king's men, seem able to obliterate the broad distinction."

That fact remains; but Stevenson in these sentences obliterated many of the smaller differences whence that broad distinction arises. We Scots are far from identical in blood with the English; nor was it a "few years" of anything that set the gulf between us and the English. The root of the matter lies in the language question; we are not the same in language. Nor, excellent in comparison to most of the efforts made by Scottish writers themselves as the passages descriptive of Scotland in many English writers are, can the essential expression of Scotland with which I am dealing be secured in English or at least any ordinary English. I and many of the younger Scottish writers are acutely conscious of this; we are aware of many things in the Scottish scene—many of the most essential things—for which, try as we may, we can find no words in English. In what then? Gaelic? Scots? Synthetic Scots? I am not prepared to say (though Gaelic must be made compulsory in all the schools in the Gaidbealtach, not as a subordinate subject taught through the medium of English but as the language through which all the other subjects are taught—and compulsory also in all the other schools in Scotland, as a second language at first but with the aim of giving it as rapidly as possible the same primacy as it has in the schools in the Gaidbealtach). I only know that what seem to me most characteristic of many parts of Scotland can only be described in a language that has very similar

qualities to the characteristics of the Worpswede idiom so oddly described by Rainer Maria Rilke:

"This idiom of Worpswede with its brief and intense words of colour, which, like heavy wings and legs of grallae (she alludes to the swampy nature of the region) moves heavily like swamp birds and has its own natural development. It is ready to fall asleep and passes promptly on to a loud and noisy laugh."

III

I have mentioned in a previous chapter the contrast between the Faroes and the Shetlands:

"Horror and despair stalk the fair fields of Europe; the stony acres of the Faroes shelter a soundly-based and happy population."

I believe the test lies just in this question of how organic with the national life the creative spirit is—what place is conceded, what role given, in the life of a people to arts and letters. It is by no accident that the poets and scholars of the Faroes are foremost in public life and that the literary and artistic revival have been consummated simultaneously and by the leadership of the same individuals as the politico-economic reconstruction and subsequent progress and prosperity. It is by no accident that in the Shetlands, in Scotland, in England and elsewhere, there is an almost complete divorce between political and practical affairs, on the one hand, and poetry, philosophy and scholarship on the other, and that public life is in the hands of men with whom no creative artist worth a rap would waste a moment's time in associating. The hideous distress, barbarism, and hopelessness of our life are due to this divorce—to this appalling confusion of values—to all these worthy citizens of ours who would regard it as "ballyhoo" to be told that social and economic regeneration depends very largely on sound cultural standards and that no country can have a decent economic and social order which has not good tastes in arts and letters and adequately pursues its own true creative spirit. The relative happiness and prosperity of the Faroes is due to the fact that the material and the spiritual have gone hand in hand.

"There was once a tiny group of men in Russia, twenty years before 1917, sitting in a semi-dark room,

an iron stove in the corner, some paper, a printing machine. It was a sorry, fantastic party. What were they doing? What could they do? Yet they were more real than the Romanoffs and all that show."

Precisely! The question in every country is whether it has—not Royal Families, Houses of Lords, House of Commons, financial magnates, "hard-headed" business men, H. G. Wellses and what not—but real men. So far as Scotland is concerned it has shown during the past ten years that it has a few real men—significantly all poets and novelists and artists—sufficiently real to blow the gaff on the hypocritical nonsense of all our Anglo-Scottish press, Churches and general public ideas of the condition of Scotland, and induce at least a small measure of reality. They forced the facts about Scotland through against a well-nigh incredible conspiracy of silence, and although their work has been partially undone since by the mindless nonentities who have subverted the nationalist movement they created, and although opposition to that nationalist movement has been forthcoming from all the chief industrialists, every ex-Lord Provost of Glasgow and Edinburgh, the Principals of the Universities, the Dean of the Thistle, and every section in agriculture, in landowning, and in commerce, the future of Scotland, in so far as it has one, will lie with these young writers (and the still younger ones who are now reinforcing the pioneer group) and they will carry the country with them out and beyond the brainless abracadabra of fatuous anachronism, the horrible blind man's buff, in which all but all of our public men, business men, and ministers are hopelessly involved, and into the glorious sunlight of the splendid culmination of that golden line of our national genius which has run, often so obscurely, through all the bloody nonsense of our old chequered history and all the drab and disgusting nonsense of our post-Industrial-Revolution history—into, in other words, the alternative to Fascism and the complement and corrective of Communism, the fulfilment of the Douglas Plan. They are more real than "all that show" which passes for solid reality, political and financial power, and public opinion in Scotland to-day, though they can be numbered still on fewer than ten fingers, and they will have a far speedier and more important victory than the

tiny group in Russia referred to above. Indeed nothing is more remarkable despite all the desperate misrepresentations of the leading newspapers and their allies on platform and in pulpit, than the success with which the pioneer group challenged and overthrew all the existing standards in Scottish literature, politics, and practically every other phase of Scottish life a few years ago. That was only a little practice blowing on the bugle. The complete collapse of the walls of the Scottish Jericho—tottering from that preliminary tootling—is imminent; but the magnitude of the impending *kulturkampf* is probably not imagined by more than one man per hundred thousand between Maidenkirk and John o' Groats, nor is their number likely to be substantially increased before it is a *fait accompli*.

§ 3.

NEWSREEL

THE day of ecclesiastical art is dawning in Scotland.

Very Rev. Charles L. Warr, Dean of the Thistle,
in *The Scotsman*.

Councillor Brown contended that the children had plenty of time to play on the swings through the week without being permitted again on the Sunday. "I think it is ridiculously out of place to have the swings going while the church bells are ringing," he added. "I would rather teach the chidren to go to the Church on the Sunday morning."

Mearns Leader.

There are undoubtedly some good reasons for ministers, preaching in Gaelic, announcing the numbers of chapters, psalms and hymns in English as well as in the vernacular.

The Weekly Scotsman.

The jubilee of the Boys' Brigade accounted for the biggest youth rally ever organised in Scotland.

The Weekly Scotsman.

The Church of Scotland, like the Scottish nation itself, needs to grow up; not to seek an idealistic juvenility. Her malady is not senile decadence but arrested development.

Scots Catholic, in *Scots Observer.*

At no time in Highland history were Gaels and Lowlanders so much devoted to each other's interests as they are at the present moment. This is made manifest in various ways, but chiefly, I think, by their united efforts on behalf of Church union.

Angus Henderson, in *Scots Observer.*

Must we fill the mind of the child with a conception of God as a jealous and vindictive and blood-thirsty tyrant who could do nothing better than order the slaughter of women and children to appease his wrath?

Rev. H. C. Mackenie, in *The Scotsman.*

With all respects to Mr. Mackenzie, we may still speak of the entire Bible as "the holy Scriptures." The blood-thirstiness has reference, manifestly, to the extermination of the Canaanites. But this, as has often been pointed out, was surgery, not butchery—the amputation of a mortifying limb in order that the "foul contagion" might not spread to the very seat of life.

Alexander Stewart, in *The Scotsman.*

I brought with me on holiday this summer Sir Arthur Quiller Couch's on *The Art of Reading.* There is included a plea—which occupies three of the twelve addresses—for the reading of the Authorised Version of the Bible in educational institutions. . . . And in explanation of that significant fact it can scarcely be contended that Sir Arthur Quiller Couch is a man who is lacking in moral sensitiveness.

Alexander Stewart, in *The Scotsman.*

What has the Church done since 1918? Has its work for Peace been commensurate with its effort for War? A recent declaration says that the Church of Scotland maintains its "policy." Obviously it has no intention of dispensing with the impudent military point of its annual

gathering in Edinburgh. Must then a man, fired with the desire to overthrow the forces of darkness—those forces to-day preventing disarmament and the coming of peace—look elsewhere than to the house of God? And if this is so, is one result not this, that the Church is attracting both inferior men to its ministry and sycophants and the thoughtless to its pews?

Scots Observer.

The Church of Scotland Year Book contains a Directory of some twenty ministerial associations and societies organised for various ends, ranging from the mutual improvement of Assembly, Synod, and Presbytery Clerks, to the safeguarding of authentic Scottish Churchmanship from the solecisms of creative committee men. A few are reformist in aim and national in scope; one or two are restrictedly cultural; and some have oecumenial aspirations such as Pan-Presbyterianism and World Peace; none has the slightest relevancy to the tension of the contemporary situation. The Directory is an inventory of organized dilettantism. If the register of ministerial associations may be taken as an index of the intellectual interests and cultural aspirations of the ministry, it is not surprising that the influence of the Scottish Church is restricted to what is sectarian, provincial, and commonplace.

Scoto-Catholic, in *Scots Observer.*

To me the so-called broad-minded person is just a ninny who cannot think for himself and therefore sits on the fence, siding with every one. I am sure there are many people to-day who would willingly join the National Party of Scotland, but only if it were one hundred per cent Protestant.

"A Covenanter," in the *Glasgow Daily Record.*

The progress made in civil aviation in Scotland this year was outlined by Mr. John C. Sword, managing director of Midland and Scottish Air Ferries Limited. He pointed out that over 10,000 passengers had been carried by his company during the six months their services were in operation, and he anticipated next year they would carry at least 50,000 passengers. Regular services had been in

operation for more than six months between Inverness and Orkney and from Renfrew to Campbeltown, Islay, and Belfast, and during that time 98 per cent of the service schedule had been maintained. *The Scotsman.*

We hear a great deal to-day about cheap nationalism. I am no great believer in internationalism. It is a wishy-washy thing. We must have at bottom a love of our land.

Lord Mackay, in *The Scotsman.*

In Scotland where towns are few and small the tie of the blood retains its old strength in a way which now seems quite surprising to our English neighbours. To us the family, and even the name, means much more than it does South of the Tweed.

Professor Mackie, in *The Scotsman.*

A case recently tried at Inverness merits rather more attention than it has received so far. It concerned three boys who pleaded guilty to having been found with four grouse and two guns in their possession. They had, in fact, been poaching on the grouse moor at Farr, but it was clear enough that their agent was justified in describing the adventure as a "boyish prank." The total fine, however, amounted to £9 for poaching and shooting without a licence, and their guns were forfeited. The value of these guns must be £10 at the least. It must seem to many who happen to be free from any illusions as to the importance of grouse that the punishment in this case rather more than fits the crime. *Glasgow Evening News.*

In an article in the May number of "Life and Work," the record of the Church of Scotland, the Rev. Hugh Stevenson points out that the decrease of 40,000 people in Scotland which the census will show has taken place alongside a reliable estimate of a 44,000 Roman Catholic increase during the ten years, and making their total now 645,000, or 13½ per cent of Scotland's population. It means, he says, that for the first decade on record the Protestant population had a decrease of 84,000 at the 1931 census.

Scots Observer.

Several interesting facts are disclosed in the report of a sub-committee of the Scottish National Development Council which has been investigating the Scottish fruit and vegetable trade. The trade accounts for far more workers than most people imagine, the production of outside fruit and vegetables absorbing one-sixth of the total number of agricultural workers in Scotland. While the acreage devoted to strawberry beds was less in 1931 than in 1912, raspberry and tomato growing both show an increase. In fact, last year's tomato production, which was valued at £360,840 was practically two-thirds of the value of the Scottish wheat crop. This is a surprising figure.

The Weekly Scotsman.

We shall all be reading the Scotch soon. A movement has been in swing for some time now—paralleling the growing demand for political nationalism—beginning in the criticism of Grieve, the poetry of MacDiarmid, and the drama of Sheil and Blake. It is producing some excellent novels now in the folk-stories of Nan Shepherd, Agnes Mure Mackenzie, and Janet Beith, slight but sure; the lusty gallivantings of Eric Linklater; and the interesting compound of realistic sense and poetic sensibility in Neil Gunn and the well-known archæologist who calls himself Lewis Grassic Gibbon.

P. M. Jack, in *The New York Sun.*

POSTLUDE. HUGH MACDIARMID

ENVOI

Scottish Jews comin' doon frae the mountains
Wi' the laws on their stany herts;
Minor prophets livin' i' the Factory Close
Or ahint the gasworks—fresh sterts?

Folk frae the Auld Testament are talkin'
O' Christ but I'm no' deceived.
Bearded men, cloakt wimmen, and in gloom
The gift o' Heaven's received.

Scottish Jews comin' doon frae the mountains,
Minor prophets frae vennel and wynd,
In weather as black as the Bible
I return again to my kind . . .

The Sauria in their ain way
Had muckle to commend them.
Fell fearsome craturs, it's a shame
That Nature had to end them.

And faith! few men aboot the day
But hae guid cause to speir
Why sicna auld impressive forms
Had to dee for them t'appear.

Sae aiblins wi' traditional Scots,
Covenanters and the lave,
Wha's grand auld gurly qualities
Deserve a better stave.

But they hung on—and still hing on—
Survivals frae an age lang dune.
Gin they'd deed a century syne
They'd whiles shine oot . . like the mune! . .

Away, away, to the mune and the devil
Wi' these muddlers, ditherers, ancient disputants,
Auld Lichts, wee Frees, Burnsians, London Scots!
Let them awa' like shadows at noon to their haunts!

To their clubs in Pall Mall wi' Elliot and Horne,
Skelton and Gilmour and Montrose and the lave
And a' the ither bats and ugsome affairs
That hae made Scotland sae lang a Gothic grave!

Peter Pan nae langer oor deity'll be
And oor boast an endless infantilism.
Away, wi' the auld superstitions. Let the sun up at last
And hurl a' sic spooks into their proper abysm.

THE END